



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

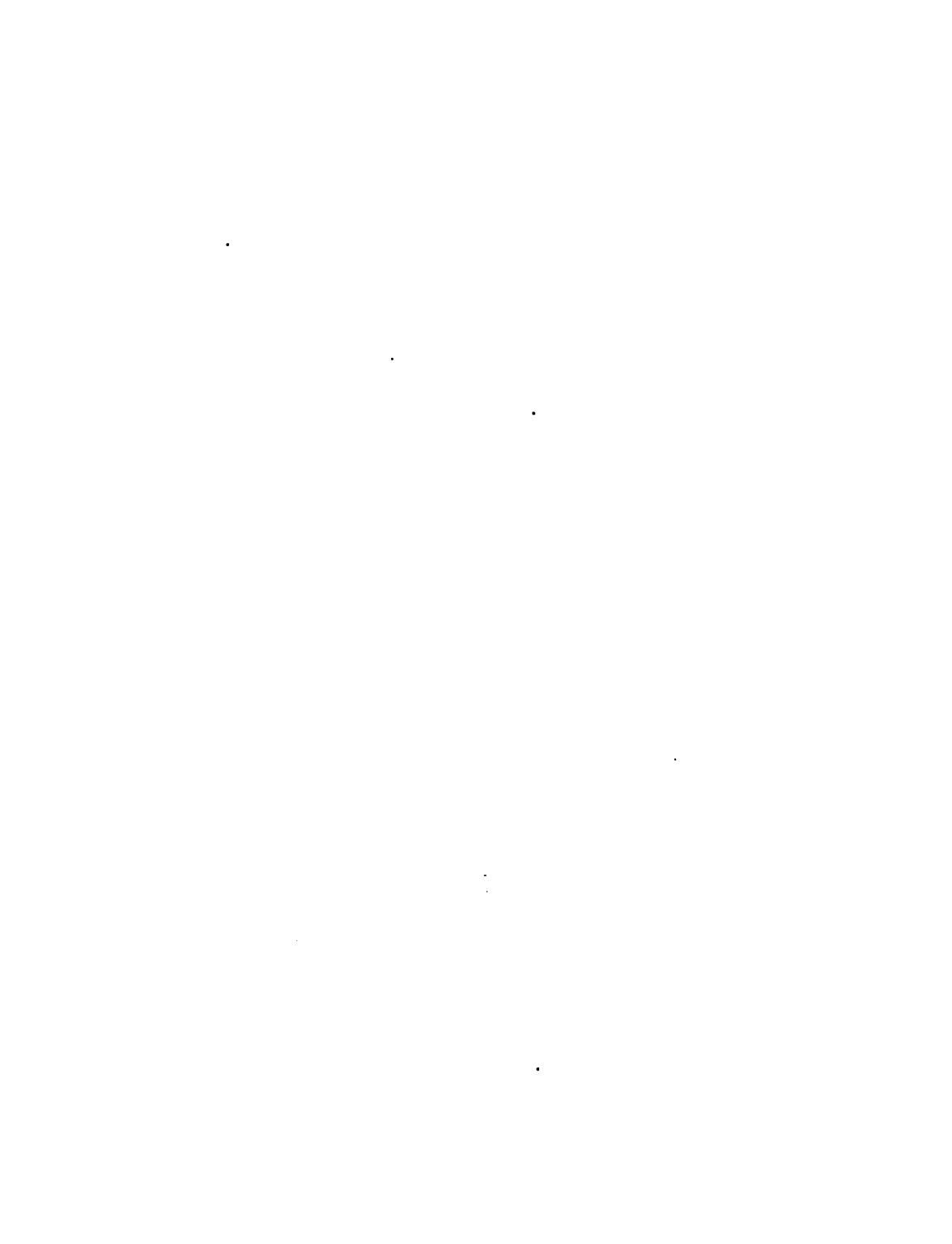
Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>





600056959/





ERLESTON GLEN.

LONDON:
BOSSON AND SONS, PRINTERS, PARADE ROAD, N.W.

ERLESTON GLEN:

A Lancashire Story of the Sixteenth Century.

BY

ALICE O'HANLON.



LONDON: BURNS AND OATES.

1878.

251. e. 134.

CONTENTS.

CHAP.	PAGE
I. AN ANCIENT CHURCH	1
II. THE SUN INN AT ORRLEIGH	8
III. THE EVE OF A WEDDING	20
IV. A SLIGHT DISAGREEMENT	28
V. A DANGEROUS GUEST	38
VI. WILLIAM ANDERTON'S SECRET	54
VII. THE MARRIAGE INTERRUPTED	65
VIII. MASTER ASHWORTH HIDES HIMSELF	77
IX. HENRY ANDERTON'S DEATH	86
X. THE REV. PAUL CUNNINGHAM	98
XI. 'IS HE DEAD, KATE?'	108
XII. A DEBATE AT WOLFFESFORD	114
XIII. ST. MICHAEL'S A REFORMED CHURCH	127
XIV. WALTER WILLOUGHBY AGAIN SEES THE JUSTICE'S- DAUGHTER	135
XV. AN INTERVIEW IN THE ORCHARD	142
XVI. A WRECKED MIND	153
XVII. THE SECRET CHAMBER	160
XVIII. A LETTER—IN DURANCE AT RIDGWOOD MANOR	167
XIX. TRIAL BY THE QUEEN'S COMMISSIONERS	174
XX. THE MANCHESTER FLEET PRISON	185
XXI. THE PRISONERS ARE VISITED BY A MINISTER OF THE REFORMED FAITH	193
XXII. THE PRISON VAULTS	202

CHAP.	PAGE
XXIII. 'BLESSED ARE THE DEAD THAT DIE IN THE LORD' .	212
XXIV. NICHOLAS WESTON RETURNS TO WARADALE . .	227
XXV. 'UNEARTHED AT LAST !'	242
XXVI. THE REWARD OF TREACHERY	256
XXVII. HUSBAND AND WIFE	270
XXVIII. JUSTICE WINDWOOD IN PURSUIT OF HIS ESCAPED CAPTIVES	278
XXIX. ON BOARD THE DRUGGER	296
XXX. ARRIVAL IN PORT	310
XXXI. LE BON ASILE	320
XXXII. A DOUBLE WEDDING	328

ERLESTON GLEN:

A Lancashire Story of the Sixteenth Century.

CHAPTER I.

AN ANCIENT CHURCH.

WITHIN a few miles of a busy, manufacturing town, with noisy mills filled with whirling machinery, and tall chimneys puffing out dense volumes of black smoke, lies a fertile little valley just in the heart of the Lancashire hills. Good, substantial roads conduct from this valley in all directions; and right through the midst of it runs a branch of the railway lines with which our whole country is, in these days, intersected. At short intervals, along the swiftly-flowing river by which it is watered and drained, appear flourishing villages, most of them containing a factory or two; whilst ploughed meadows, or fields of waving grain, cover the rising ground which has been reclaimed from the dominion of elms and oaks.

Three hundred years ago, however, when that busy town was itself little better than a village, this now well-populated and accessible valley enjoyed a seclusion equal to, if not greater than, that of any locality in England.

Thick forests at that time girthed the bases of the hills amidst which it winds; and narrow, rutty lanes alone connected it with the outer world. In place of the

groups of stone buildings by which it is at present bordered, the broad Wara gurgled its peaceful way between green banks fringed with overhanging trees. Amidst these might be seen, here and there, a picturesque-looking farm-house, or a comfortably thatched cottage; but at no point of its course through the district did there then appear an aggregate of habitations sufficiently numerous to deserve the appellation of village. By a stretch of courtesy, however, we may bestow that of hamlet upon a cluster of small houses which had gathered about a rude bridge spanning the blue river, all of them built of wood, and each having its upper story projecting considerably beyond the lower.

At a short distance from the place formerly occupied by this hamlet, there runs off from the valley a glen, some mile or so in length, narrow at its entrance, but widening out as the hills fall away from each other on either hand, and terminating where those hills eventually meet in a gentle, amphitheatre-like sweep. Within this doubly sequestered spot, there stood, in the days of 'Good Queen Bess,' an old mansion, which went by the name of Erleston Grange, and in which, from time immemorial, had dwelt a branch of the ancient Lancashire family of Anderton.

The house was situated at the further end of the glen, and in a slightly elevated position, its form and dimensions being thrown out by a background of forest, draping the low mountain at its rear, and a few acres of undulating ground constituting in front of it a diminutive park.

At the period we have mentioned, the Grange presented a somewhat curious medley of architecture. A circular tower, apparently of Norman date, so thickly overgrown with ivy as to look like a great round ivy-bush, formed its oldest part. To this had been added, by its owners in successive generations, structures of

various sizes and shapes; the latest erection of the irregular pile consisting of an entire new frontage in the stately Corinthian style.

Standing upon a lower level within the glen, but close by its entrance, was another house, which, though modern in comparison with that just described, had, nevertheless, been weathered by the winds and rains of fully a century. It was built of wood and plaster, painted black and white, with lozenges and trefoils upon the chief of its numerous gables; and within its interior were long, rambling passages, and many-angled, low-roofed apartments.

The house bore the title of Hall-i'-th'-Wood—somewhat inappropriately—since, though, like its neighbour the Grange, it was backed by a well-wooded brow, it stood out in the free air and sunshine, shaded only by a few tall larches and graceful elms. There was no park attached to this less aristocratic-looking dwelling, but an avenue, entered through a wooden gate, with pillars painted black and white, to match the house, skirted a well-kept lawn at its front, the three other sides being encompassed by a garden.

A walk of ten minutes from this house would have sufficed to bring a person acquainted with its existence and whereabouts to a church, situated upon the hill-side, immediately without the glen, but so concealed amidst dense, encircling woods as to be entirely invisible from the plain below.

The church was of stone, old and moss-grown, but in a good state of preservation. It had been erected and endowed by Sir Ralph Anderton, a remote ancestor of the present owner of Erleston Grange; and now, nearly fifty years after the Reformation had first set its foot in England, and at a time when the most clandestine exercise of the old religion was severely punishable by law, that church was still Catholic. Mass was daily

celebrated upon its altar, and each Sunday and holiday saw a devout congregation assembled within its walls. Not a very small congregation either; for although, with the exception of the few families collected together in the hamlet we have mentioned, the inhabitants of Waradale lived, for the most part, in detached dwellings, scattered about over the vale and surrounding declivities, this retired neighbourhood was less sparsely peopled than a careless survey of it might have led one to suppose. Nor was the attendance at this church confined to those who, in happier times, would have constituted its legitimate parishioners. In addition to them, a small number of earnest Catholics were accustomed, on each day of obligation, to steal thither from almost incredible distances, in order that they might worship according to the dictates of their consciences, and with the rites of their forefathers. And that those rites and that worship were, in all probability, now celebrated in no other church than their own throughout the British dominions, those who frequented it fully believed; and not without reason, since, although hundreds of missionary priests travelled the kingdom in disguise, administering the sacraments to a persecuted people, and offering up the Holy Sacrifice, this was elsewhere done only with the most profound secrecy, as a rule in private houses, and frequently in the dead of night. Owing, however, to the extreme seclusion of the valley, and to the favour extended towards them by a justice of the peace, who, though outwardly a Conformist, was at heart a Papist, this fortunate little company of Catholics had, so far, escaped all personal suffering from the cruel penal laws.

But how long this happy immunity from the troubles of their fellow-countrymen was to continue, had, at the moment at which our story commences, become a matter of anxious doubt. The friendly justice was dead, and a

man of very different character and disposition had just succeeded him in office.

From another source, moreover, danger threatened the valley. In the neighbouring town of Orrleigh, where, until a few weeks ago, the established ritual had been each Sunday carelessly read over in the parish church by a good-natured cobbler (the deficiency of Protestant clergymen at Elizabeth's accession having necessitated the employment of laymen for this purpose), there now dwelt a regularly ordained rector. This gentleman, the Rev. Silas Featherstone by name, was a zealous Puritan, as throughout Elizabeth's reign were vast numbers of ministers in the Established Church.

He, howbeit, in common with most of his brethren of the same persuasion at this period, disclaimed the imputation of schism, and acknowledged the lawfulness of continuing in this Church, whilst seeking a further reform both in her ceremonies and discipline; and in this opinion and conduct his sect was supported by some of the most noted Swiss Reformers.

Greatly disapproving of this faction in the Church whereof she had constituted herself supreme head, the Queen, throughout her life, constantly endeavoured to put it down. But the Genevan party had powerful friends both in the House of Commons and in the Cabinet; and although, in the earlier part of her reign, its adherents in Lancashire, as in other parts of the country, had shared, in some degree, the penalties and disabilities of Catholics, this was not now the case. At the instance of her favourite, the Earl of Leicester, a strong partisan of the sect, Elizabeth had consented to encourage in this county the Puritanism which she disliked, on account of the Popery which she detested.

And with the end which she and her Government had equally in view—viz. the stamping out of the Catholic

religion, or, at any rate, the prevention of any outward profession of it—the course was by no means impolitic.

For whilst a vast majority of the gentry and freeholders, as well as the peasantry of Lancashire, remained steadfast to the faith of their ancestors, the Puritan element in the new Church had here gained a stronger ascendancy than in any other part of England. Anglicanism in the country was weak, and, in consequence, went to the wall during the prolonged religious contentions which raged so fiercely between Catholicism and its natural and bitter enemy from across the Channel.

At the date of which we write, a clique of Puritans, appointed by the Privy Council under the title of Commissioners, exercised ecclesiastical jurisdiction over Lancashire—of whom two, in order the better to fulfil a command which they had received from the Queen to practise greater diligence in the discovery and punishment of Popish recusants, had taken up their abode in Manchester. Of these, the principal, as regards rank, was the Earl of Derby. A High Churchman in the reign of Henry VIII., the Earl, like his master, had professed a belief in the Mass, the Invocation of Saints, Purgatory, &c.; but accommodating himself to the spirit of the time, he had repudiated these tenets under the rule of Henry's son, and as a reward for his conformity had received a gift of the college-house, together with some ninety-five acres of land belonging to the collegiate church and school of Manchester—agreeable additions, no doubt, to the large amount of monastic property which had fallen to his share in the previous reign. At the restoration of religion under Mary, the noble Earl (whose family motto was '*sans changer*') had returned to the old faith, and had appeared to be an ardent Catholic in every respect save one—the restitution of Church property—upon which point he retained staunch Protestant principles. Once more, upon

Elizabeth's accession to the throne, the supple Stanley had turned with the tide. He had now become a Puritan and a zealous persecutor of the Lancashire Catholics.

A close friend of the Earl's and a frequent visitor at his house, Aldport Lodge, was William Chadderton, Bishop of Chester, the second commissioner to whom we have referred as having taken up his abode in Manchester. The Bishop had been appointed to the wardenship of the collegiate church, and under his management the adjoining college, newly founded by Elizabeth, had become a nursery for Calvinistic Presbyterianism within the fold of the Established Church. Most of its fellows were avowed Puritans and unflinching enemies of Popery with all its adjuncts, even to the games and festivities of May-day and other holiday seasons, which were put down by them with a firm hand.

Puritan clergymen filled the majority of benefices throughout the Bishop's diocese, and were encouraged to zeal in pursuit of their profession, as well as instructed in its duties, by means of monthly 'exercises' held under his direction in the parish church of Manchester. A Puritan high sheriff was at the head of civil affairs in the county; Puritan magistrates sat upon the bench; Puritan gentlemen were keepers of the prisons; and Puritan functionaries occupied many of the lower judicial or executive posts. As will be seen, then, the ecclesiastical faction to which the new Rector of Orrleigh belonged was a dominant one in this part, at least, of the virgin Queen's dominions, and trained as he had been in the violent anti-Papistic creed of his sect, the Rev. Silas Featherstone, with powerful authority at his back, was likely to prove no unformidable enemy to Catholics. It is scarcely to be wondered at, therefore, that apprehensions on the score of his vicinity should be entertained in the quiet and hitherto unmolested valley of the Wara.

CHAPTER II.

THE SUN INN AT ORRLEIGH.

‘HALLOA, there! Come hither, sirrah, and take my horse.’ The speaker was a stout, good-humoured-looking, little man, about forty years of age, who had drawn bridle before the Sun Inn at Orrleigh, and was addressing a serving man who stood within the shadow of its projecting porch. ‘Why, Jack, is ’t you?’ he added, as the man came forward in obedience to his summons. ‘Take him round to the stable, Jack, and give him a feed of oats,’ he continued, patting the well-fed cob from which he had dismounted. ‘I’m going into the house for half an hour to warm myself.’

‘I’ faith, aw’ll warrant your honour’s well-nigh starved to deeoath,’ returned the ostler, receiving the reins with a respectful salutation. ‘Th’ wind’s bitter cow’d to-day. By th’ Mass it’s liker th’ middle o’ January nor the first o’ May. You’ll find th’ mistress i’ th’ hewse-place, Squire. An’ aw’d recommend your honour to tak’ a quart or two o’ our prime yale aboard afore startin’ again o’ that long ride whoam. It ’ud keep th’ cow’d out.’

‘Ay, ay, I’ll look after that, Jack, you may depend on’t,’ responded the gentleman, smiling. And after waiting an instant until his horse had disappeared through an archway which conducted to the inn yard, he passed beneath the clumsy porch; and following a narrow, crooked passage to its termination, threw open the door of a huge kitchen, flagged like the passage and strewn with white

sand. Broad beams of black oak crossed the low roof, from which were suspended flitches of bacon, hams, and dried deers' tongues. Two or three small diamond-paned windows, set high in the wall, served to light the apartment, and a great wood fire blazed upon the hearthstone. Seated close by this, upon benches which had been drawn up on either side, appeared some half dozen men, drinking and talking together. One of these was the landlord of the tavern, a hale man of sixty or thereabouts, whose brown hair was only now beginning to show streaks of silver, and whose blue eyes still retained much of the brightness of youth. Near him, resting her hand upon a well-scoured deal table, on which were disposed a metal jug and one or two pewter pots, stood his wife—a buxom dame nearly twenty years his junior. Mistress Morley affected the fashion, and was somewhat overdressed for her station, but, being a good-looking woman, did no injustice to her fine ruffles and silken kirtle.

Turning round as the door unclosed, she at once recognised the visitor, and advancing a few steps dropped him a curtsy, exclaiming at the same time, in cordial tones: 'God save us a'! If 'tisn't Squire Rutherford! Troth, sir, you're heartily welcome. It's long sin' you were i' our poor house 'afore. But will your honour condescend to tak' a seat by this fire, for we ha' not leeted one i' the little parlour to-day?'

'Ay, that I will, and gladly,' replied the jovial Squire, nodding to the landlord, who had risen to greet him, and politely returning the good morrows of the other guests. 'And I'll drink a pint of mulled ale, fair dame, an 't will please you to prepare it for me,' he subjoined, placing himself upon the chair which had been set for him in front of the blazing logs.

'I hav'n't seen you at Mass lately, Mistress Morley,' he remarked presently, when his active hostess presented

him with a tankard of the warm and fragrant beverage he had ordered. 'How is that? You are not in ill health, or your rosy cheeks belie you.'

'Hew, nawe, sir, it's not been sickness 'at has kept me away,' sighed the woman, shaking her head sorrowfully. 'My health's well enoo', thank Heaven. But, to tell th' truth, Squire,' she added in a low tone—designating her husband by a backward movement of the head—'he has forbid me to goo any moor to th' dear owd church i' Waradale.'

'Ay, woman, aw have forbid thee to goo theer any moor, and aw forbid thee again,' exclaimed the host brusquely, his quick ears having caught both question and answer. 'It's all very weel for th' gentry to mind their consciences wi' their long purses to back 'em up, but it won't do for poor folk like me, aw can tell thee. Neaw, look yo here, your honour,' he went on argumentatively, addressing Squire Rutherford. 'Aw ha' eight childer to find i' food an' clooas, not to speak o' th' wife's dresses and farthingales. Aw, by th' mon it's bin as much as ever aw could do, so fur, to mak' both ends meet, for it's nobbut a beggarly livin' but aw'm getting eawt o' th' yale-heawse. So wheer'd aw be, aw wonner, if aw had to pay deawn a hundred marks for Cicely's yearling Mass? Nay, nay, aw've nawe likin' for ruin and starvation oather for mysel' or my fam'ly; and tho' aw hope aw'll ha' time given me to repent i' th' end, an' 'at th' good Lord 'll sen' me a priest when aw'm deein', aw'st give in neaw and goo to the Parliament church, and so shall th' wife and th' youngsters. Aw'll stend to that.'

'Nay, but, Adam, I pray you consider,' remonstrated Squire Rutherford, touched by the distressed expression upon Dame Cicely's comely face, 'your wife and children have been going regularly to St. Michael's Church these ten years past, and no harm has come of it yet.'

'Well, nawe, there's neaw harm coom o' it yet, as aw kneaws on,' returned the landlord promptly. 'But things is a deeol different wi' us i' Orrleigh fro' what they wur afore th' new parson and th' new justice coom'd to it, as your honour must be aweer. When th' good Major wur alive, God rest his sowl! an' th' deeof'owd cobbler, Dick Riley, mumbled through th' prayers every Sunday i' th' parish church, folk met do as they pleased, and go to their dooties if they'd a mind to. Th' Major wur fain to wink at other folk gooin' to Mass when his own wife and niece did th' same; an' as for Dick, he never fashed hissel' abeawt empty benches, so long as they gav' him his six shillin' a quarter for gooin' through the prayers.'

'An' what mak' o' a man is th' new parson, Adam?' inquired a thin, light-haired man from the opposite bench, who had entered the inn but a few moments before the Squire.

'Why! Giles Henderson, thou never means to say 'at thou hasn't sin him yet?' queried the landlord in his turn. 'Hast' not bin to church sin he coom'd to th' parish?'

'Nawe, aw hav'n't,' returned the other.

'An' dost kneaw th' consequences of that, mon?' asked Adam again. 'Dost kneaw what's to be done wi' them 'at refuses to goo for a whole month?'

'Nawe, aw cannot say as aw do, reetly,' responded Giles, whose disposition was somewhat phlegmatic; 'but thou canst tell me if thou's a mind.'

'Aw that I will, lad, for it'll be a bad job for thee if thou stays away mich longer, aw con tell thee,' said Adam. 'So to get agate, there's Maister Cherrick, o' Healey Hall, and young Ben Faulker bin appointed churchwardens, as may be thou kneaws, an' th' new parson—Sir Silas Featherstone, they ca' him—gav' eawt, th' very first Sunday 'at he preached i' St. John's, at each week end th' two o' them wur to report—oather to himsel' or to th' justice

o' th' peace, Maister Anthony Windwood—th' names o' every parishioner 'at had bin absent fro' th' service upon th' Sunday afore. An' now, thou 'st hear what th' penalty o' bein' a recusant is—that's th' name they've christened them by as sticks to th' owd faith thou kneaws. But, coom, eawr Cicely shall tell thee that,' he pursued, turning to his wife: 'aw want her to get it well i' her yed, and hoo yeard it as well as me, for aw mad' her goo wi' me to church that day.'

'Ay, that thou didst, God forgive thee!' groaned the poor hostess; 'it wur th' first time aw'd set my fuot i'side it sin' Sir John Buckley died; an' by my faith, aw wish it met be th' last. Heigho! these are terrible times we're livin' in? Mother o' mercy, pity us a'!' And, bursting into tears, Mistress Morley sank upon a seat and lifted her dainty apron to her eyes.

'Neaw then, dame, neaw then, sweetheart,' murmured the innkeeper soothingly, 'dunnot tak' on so, dunnot. Thou kneaws aw cannot abeer to see thee cryin'. Sure, aw'd be fain to let thee goo to Mass, and aw'd be fain to goo mysel' too, God kneaws, if it wur nobbut safe. But just bethink thee, Cicely, how wouldst like to ha' thy husband ta'en away to prison some foine neet? How wouldst like to ha' th' house sold o're thy yed, and to see thy childer beggin' bread? An' how wouldst like a' thy foine clooas stol'n fro' thee, good wife? Marry! thou'd think th' times worse then than thou dost neaw, i' my opinion.'

Alarmed by this picture, with its heartrending culmination, Dame Cicely ceased to sob, and dropped her apron; and with tear-drops arrested upon her now pallid cheeks commenced tenderly to smooth out her dress and rearrange her laces. Then, perceiving that his words had had the desired effect, Adam, with an inward chuckle, resumed his instruction of Giles.

'Well, mon, aw'll tell thee a' abeaut it, i' a few words neaw,' he began. 'Parliament, it seems, couldn't feel quite satisfied wi' th' child it had borne—th' new law church. I' its opinion, hoo wasn't well-favoured enoo' to draw folk to hersel', oather wi' th' beauty o' her teachin' or service. So it wur resolv'd folk must be *druv* to her; and last year it wur settled by Government that a fine o' twenty pound a month should be laid upo' them 'at wouldn't goo to th' Protestant church, an' that if onybody heerd Mass he should ha' th' privilege o' payin' a hundred marks for it. An' if we're to believe th' parson, Giles, these fines are gooin' to be levied regel'r i' Orrleigh, an' them as wi' not or connot pay, 'll be ta'en to Manchester an' clapped i' th' new gaol they've built theer o' purpose for Catholics.'

'Ay, but dommit, Adam, that's not th' warst o' it,' remarked a burly red-faced yeoman, setting his empty pewter upon the floor by his side, and letting his hand fall heavily above his gaitered knee. 'That's not th' warst o' it. For, by a' accounts, it's bin made a mighty serious matter neaw to know wheer there's a priest and not to tell on it to th' magistrate. An', by 'r Lady, aw reckon there's not mony o' us here 'at hasn't a notion.'

'Hush't wi' thee, Jacob; howd thy noise, wilt thou?' interposed the landlord, glancing uneasily at the door. 'Odsbody, man, who's to prove as we kneaw anything, if we nobbut keep a wary tongue i' eawr yead? An', by th' Mass, aw'd like to see th' chap i' this town as 'ud turn informer agin good Father Maitland! He'd ha' coom o' a breed 'at aw'd not like to ha' mony dealings wi. But, for a' that, aw'll take care Cicely doesn't go a-nigh him agin. An' yur honour 'll not blame me for that, aw'm thinkin'?' he inquired of Squire Rutherford in conclusion.

'Faith, Adam, it seems hard to do so,' replied that gentleman. 'But you know, good friend, there's a verse

in the holy gospel which saith, "That whosoever leaveth houses or lands, or parents or children, for our dear Lord's sake, shall receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting." That's a reward worth the trying for, Adam,' he continued, with a solemnity which dignified and transformed his whole countenance. 'And God helping me, I mean to stand fast by our holy religion, be the consequences what they may. Nathless, it *is* hard to blame those that fall into apostasy,' he added after a pause; 'and I trust God 'll lay their sin to the charge of them that tempted to it by threats o' punishments almost too heavy to be borne.'

A silence of some duration followed Squire Rutherford's remark. This was broken at length by an old man with long gray beard and stooping frame, who throughout the previous conversation had been rocking himself to and fro as he listened, with a wearying regularity of movement.

'Eh! why cannot th' Queen an' th' Parliament let us abee, aw wonner!' he burst out in the quavering voice of age. 'Why cannot they let's worship eawr Maker i' th' good owd fashion as ha' served th' country a' these centuries, ever sin' St. Augustine landed i' it, an' th' same as is neaw observ'd o're a' th' warld beside! What *reet* ha' they, aw'd like to kneaw, to be thrustin' their new-fangled notions deawn eawr throats wi' the pint o' th' sword, as you may say? Dule tak' it! it's a strange thing, to my thinkin' if God A'mighty leeft th' true religion to be fundeawt fifteen hundred year a'ter He coom'd to yearth to teach it! An' for *my* part, aw'll goo noan to their heretic sarvice; that's sattled. Aw na' not bin i' th' parish church this twelve year, an' aw'm not goin' to begin again neaw. Aw'l stop a-whoam o' Sundays, an' say my beads as aw've bin used to, so's what they do wi' me; for aw'm gettin' an owd mon, 'an aw'd like to save my sowl if I con.'

‘ Well, i’ good sooth, as far’s aw con see,’ observed his next neighbour reflectively, ‘ the Queen gains nowt by forcing folk to renounce th’ Pope’s authority. We’d a’ be a seet more loyal, aw’m sure, if we might serve God as well as her Majesty. Heigho ! England wur a deeol happier country when hoo wur Catholic ! Th’ blessin’ o’ God rested upo’ her then.’

‘ Marry, aw’ll tell yo what, mates ! ’ cried a strongly-built man, by trade a blacksmith, springing up excitedly, and waving a grimy hand, ‘ aw’ll tell yo what ! It’s my opinion ‘at nobody *believes* th’ Queen’s th’ head o’ th’ Church, for a’ hoo ca’s hersel’ so ; an’ aw’d wager my forge and bellows hoo doesn’t believe it hersel’. An’ moor, I deawt if onybody believes i’ th’ new religion oather. Aw don’t see heaw they con, for it’s like a chameleon, for a’ the world, for changin’ its colour. Aw’m not so owd as eawr friend i’ th’ corner theer, but aw’ve lived long enough to see a mony shades i’ it. Aw’ve sin’ it shiftin’ backurds and forruds from this belief to t’other, an’ makin’ an’ mendin’ at its prayer book an’ service, till it made a body fair i’ a maze to look at it. Certes, it ‘ud be passin’ strange, aw’m thinkin,’ if us scholars know’d what we’d gotten to learn, afore our tachers ha’ made up their minds what they wanten to tach us.’

‘ Well, at any rate, *aw’ve* no reason to like th’ new religion, as th’ maist o’ yo’le own,’ protested a much younger man than any who had yet spoken ; ‘ it’s but a fou turn it’s sarved me and my belungin’s ; for, as yo’ kneaw, my feyther’s bin bedridden ever sin th’ day they poo’d down th’ altar o’ St. John, and brent th’ pictures an’ th’ crucifixes i’ th’ market-place, an’ that’ll be fifteen year come Michaelmas. He couldn’t abide to see th’ sacred things brennin’, poor chap ; an’ he’d getten howld o’ th’ end o’ an altar-cloth as hadn’t took fire, an’ was pooin’ it quietly eawt o’ th’ heap, when a sodyer caught him a blow upo’

th' back as fell him to th' greawnd, an' injured his spine so's he wur ne'er able to set fuut to th' floor 'at after.'

'Ay, good lack! that *wur* a sad day for him, poor mon,' observed the owner of the tavern; 'still, on th' whole, good nebour,' he went on reflectively, 'when we coom to think o' what's bin gooin' on so long i' other parts o' eawr lond, we must confess as we ha' had little cause o' complaint i' Orrleigh. Yo see, we ha' had no regel'r parson like, sin' th' first one deedod, as was put to th' church when it wur made Protestant. That wur Sir John Buckley; and he, yo know, wur but a half-an'-half sort o' chap; for though he'd read th' Common Prayer at th' regel'r hour o' Sundays, he'd ha' said Mass early i' th' mornin' for onybody as liked to year it, an' that, aw guess, was welly a' th' town. An' faith, aw yerd, that he ownt when he wur deein' that he'd never left th' owd faith i' his heart at a', as onybody might ha' known. Then, look yo, what o' a justice we ha' had a' these years. By our Lady, so's whether Major Windwood wur a Protestant or not, he wur as good a friend o' Catholics as ever stepped shoe-leather.'

'Ay, truly that he was, Adam,' acquiesced Squire Rutherford; 'but how came it to pass, think you, that he left his house and property to that currish nephew of his?'

'*Left* it to him, your honour,' ejaculated the host; 'what, left it to *him*! Gad-a-mercy, th' owd gentlemon 'ud ne'er be able to rest i' his grave i' peace if he nobbut knew Maister Anthony'd gotten it. Why, he hated th' chap like pison, by what Jonas Smith says, an' he ought to kneaw, for he's lived at Ridgwood Manor, boy an' mon, these thirty-five years; he wur th' heir, yo see, Squire, that's heaw it wur, an' Major deedod wi'out makin' a will.'

‘Bless us! that was a careless trick,’ muttered the Squire, ‘not to make a will.’

‘Well, happen it wur, yur honour,’ assented Adam, ‘but, yo see, sir, th’ Major wur loike good mony other folk beside; he thought if he’d gotten a’ his affairs straight an’ sattled like, it ‘ud hasten his deeoath; but, however, by what Jonas says, he wur for ever dinnin’ it into his wife, that as soon’s ever he wur took ill, hoo must send straight off for a notary at onet, so ‘s he could leave a’ he had to her an’ Miss Isabella. But, Lord save us! th’ fit as took him off coom’d so sudden, that there wasn’t time for th’ poor lady nobbut to oppen th’ parlour door, an’ screech eawt that somebody must run for a doctor, afore th’ poor gentleman had drawed away.’

‘And are the two ladies still living at Ridgwood Manor?’ inquired his interlocutor.

‘Humph! nawe, your worship, they aren’t,’ interposed Mistress Morley, who, having drawn her seat within the circle by the fire, had for some time been awaiting an opportunity of joining in the conversation. ‘Black Anthony, “th’ Devil’s darling,” as his own mon says they used to ca’ him, for a by-name, deawn seauth, soon sent *them* to th’ right-abeawt, an’ they’ve left the town. But there’s two or three o’ th’ servants stoppin’ on wi’ th’ new maister, for, yo see, he offer’t them good wages if they’d stay i’ their places. Jonas Smith’s one o’ them, an’ it’s him ‘at tells us a’ as goes forrüd i’ Ridgwood. They say, Squire, he’s very rich, is Maister Windwood, over and above his uncle’s fortin’; but, Holy Jesu! it passes me an’ he get ony good eawt o’ his wealth, seein’ as heau he’s made it wi’ thievin’ an’ informin’ again Catholics, an’ betrayin’ priests to their deeoath.’

‘Beshrew the base fellow!’ cried the Squire; ‘he wasn’t long in getting appointed to the post of justice of the peace, left vacant by his good uncle’s death; ‘tis

scarce three weeks since Ridgwood came into his possession. Marry! our rulers know well when they've found a fitting instrument to carry out their foul and bloody laws. Is the man married?"

'Ay, your worship, he's married for certain,' she replied, 'though it's little love he bears his lady, by a' accounts; he's got a daughter, though, sir, as is the very leet o' hise'e, if Jonas Smith tells truth, an' as fine, strappin', an' handsome a wench as ever you'd wish to see. Awful yedstrong and maisterfu' though, hoo is, Jonas says, tho' her feyther doesn't seem to see it, for he just gives in to the girl i' everything; and cooms and goos at her bidden' as though he wur her galley-slave. An' mighty busy hoo's kep' him, makin' alterations i' the heawse and greawnts, ever sin' he coom'd to Ridgwood; so's, aw understand, he hasn't had time to look abeawt him yet, an' a good job too!'

'Troth, good dame, I'd be thankful an' she'd keep him so well employed that he'd never have time to look about him, so far as Erleston Glen, at any rate,' remarked Squire Rutherford. 'But, zounds! I must hasten in that direction, myself,' he continued, rising hastily; 'I have greatly overstayed my time. God send Bingo be well rested, for he'll get a touch of the spur; I'll have to ride hard to reach Hall-i'-th'-Wood in time for supper. My daughter Helen is to be married on the morrow, Mistress Morley,' he added, in a confidential whisper. 'See, here are some gems' (drawing forth from his doublet a case of diamond ornaments) 'which Master Henley's son took to London to have reset for me in the fashion; they are to be her mother's present, and my errand to Orrleigh to-day was to fetch them home.'

'God save us a'! Well-a-day! So Mistress Helen's goin' to wed to-morrow!' cried the comely dame, interested, as a true woman always is, in the subject of

marriage. 'Heaven bless her bonny face an' sweet young heart! Aw wish her joy, aw do fro' th' bottom of my heart; an' aw'll be sworn, Squire, aw'd kneaw reet weel who th' bridegroom'll be,' she added, as she handed her departing guest his stirrup cup of sack. 'An' by 'r Lady, if Adam'll let me, aw'll ha' th' nag eawt to-morrow an' ride o'er to see th' weddin'.'

CHAPTER III.

THE EVE OF A WEDDING.

REFRESHED by food and rest, Bingo set off at a brisk trot, which was only interrupted once during the entire journey homewards. This was upon the occasion of passing Ridgwood Manor, the residence, as we have learnt, of the late and present justice of the peace, which lay to the left of the Squire's road, at a distance of nearly three miles from the small town of Orrleigh.

The Manse was a two-storied, somewhat straggling, stone building, with numerous windows, scarcely any two of which were alike in size, or on a level in position. Its roof, which was surrounded by a low, wooden parapet, or balustrade, exhibited a profusion of chimneys, and had a cupola in the centre; whilst a smooth, mossy lawn in front was ornamented with triumphs of the topiarian art, in the shape of yew and holly bushes, curiously cut into the resemblances of birds, quadrupeds, and other figures, the most remarkable of them being a large elephant with a castle on his back. Riding slowly past the high, carefully clipped hedge, which skirted the estate upon the side of the road he was travelling, Squire Rutherford peered over it with some interest, noting traces of the alterations of which Dame Morley had spoken, in the extension of a flower garden, situated at the western end of the house, and in the enlargement of one or two windows upon the ground floor.

Then, muttering something as he left the house be-

hind him, which was not exactly a blessing upon its proprietor, the Squire touched his horse with the spur, and, continuing his ride at the former rapid pace, soon reached home.

Throwing off his plumed hat and cloak, he passed into a large wainscoted parlour opening from the entrance hall. The room was all aglow with the light and warmth of a huge fire, and a babble of cheerful voices greeted his appearance; for, in addition to his own family, a few familiar friends were dispersed about the apartment, who had assembled to spend the evening at Hall-i'-th'-Wood. Saluting his guests with much heartiness, the Squire apologised for his tardy arrival; then, seating himself by his wife, expressed a hope that he had not kept the supper waiting.

'Not very long, dear heart,' responded the stout, motherly-looking dame he addressed, 'but in sooth, you are a little late, and Margery has been very cross this half hour past. She declares that everything will be over-cooked. I have had to send Helen to the kitchen to pacify her. A sight of that lassie always dispels her ill humour. But what was it kept you, Thomas?'

'A tankard of mulled ale at the Sun Inn, I believe, good wife,' replied the Squire, in a tone of pretended deprecation. 'But, prithee, don't be angry. Come hither, Agnes, and take father's part,' he continued, lifting to his knee a pretty little girl in a scarlet home-spun dress, who had been nestling in Mistress Rutherford's lap. 'Don't let mother scold.'

'Nay, father, mother never scolds,' returned the child, caressing him, but looking round at the same time with loving eyes at the sweet face which answered hers with a ready smile.

'Marry, not very often, little one, i' good faith,' assented the Squire, smiling in his turn with affectionate

admiration at the wife of his bosom. 'But here comes our bonny bride!' he exclaimed, as a dark-eyed girl of eighteen, with oval cheeks, clear brunette complexion, and the same air of amiability about her face as characterised that of her mother, entered the room. 'Supper's ready, is it, sweet?' he added, repeating the announcement she had made as he kissed her cheek. 'Well, I trow most of us are ready for it.' And advancing towards a stately lady, who sat at some little distance, he offered her his hand, and waiting only until his wife, with a venerable man of seventy, had taken the precedence, led her to the dining-hall.

It was a very sumptuous repast which Margery Dawson, head cook and general suzerain of the Hall-i'-th'-Wood kitchen, had prepared in honour of the young mistress who was this evening to sup for the last time in her father's house as an unmarried girl; and in spite of her predictions, none of the dishes were over-cooked.

Whilst gathered around his hospitable board, we will take the opportunity of introducing to the reader Squire Rutherford's guests, as well as any member of his family of whom mention has not yet been made. Installed in the post of distinction at the right hand of his hostess was the aged man she had conducted to table—Father Maitland, to whom allusion has been made in the previous chapter. Hair, white as snow, shaded a countenance wrinkled with years, but bearing the impress of exalted piety, and his gray eyes, clear and innocent as those of a child, beamed with unfeigned benevolence. It was in the valley of the Wara that this holy man had passed the greater part of his protracted and laborious life, and the loving reverence with which he was regarded by his parishioners amounted almost to idolatry.

As an incidental proof of the estimation in which he was so deservedly held, may be noted the fact that he was

universally addressed as 'Father'—although, at the time of which we write, this honourable title was not usually given to secular priests—the ordinary designation of such being 'Sir' or 'Master.' By common consent, however, it had been accorded to him, as well expressive of his character, and of the relationship he held with those around him.

Directly opposite to their venerable pastor were seated Sir John and Lady Anderton, and occupying a place by the side of the latter appeared a second and much younger priest. Rupert Ashworth, for that was his name, was a well-built, handsome man, with a broad, intellectual forehead, clear-cut features, and mobile mouth, about which there dwelt an expression of kindliness, though, also, of some weakness and indecision. Educated and ordained abroad, he had for the last five years acted as Father Maitland's curate, and although as yet he had not succeeded in obtaining either so full a confidence or affection as were bestowed upon the elder priest, he was much liked in the district.

Upon a stool on Master Ashworth's left hand had been placed little Agnes Rutherford, and forming his *vis-à-vis*, sat her sister Helen, supported upon either side by a young man.

Of these one was the bridegroom elect—Henry, elder son of Sir John and Lady Anderton. He was a tall, noble-looking youth, with the stamp of aristocratic birth and lineage in his whole appearance and bearing, but he was not handsome. His features were too irregular, and his complexion too sallow to allow him to merit that designation. Still the face was one that not only pleased but impressed; for in spite of the thinness which gave it a somewhat haggard look, there was a depth of character about the well-formed, resolute mouth and dark expressive eyes which could not fail to excite interest in its owner.

And that Henry Anderton was capable of inspiring something more than interest was proved by the loving glances which so constantly and frankly met his own, from the fair girl with whom he was now conversing in low tones, and whom he hoped to-morrow to call his wife.

Helen's neighbour upon the other side was her half-brother, Walter Willoughby, a child of Mistress Rutherford by a former marriage.

Together with his mother he had been taken, when only two years old, to the home of the rich and genial natured proprietor of the Hall-i'-th'-Wood. He had, moreover, been taken to his heart; and regarding the little fellow with a sincere attachment the Squire had felt no difficulty in acting towards him the part of a father.

Indeed, in no way had his treatment of Walter, whom he really looked upon as a son, differed from that bestowed by him upon his own offspring.

Of the latter, Helen and Agnes were the only two who had survived out of eight. In appearance neither of the girls bore any resemblance to their brother. Like their mother, both were dark in eye and skin, and had the ruddy colour of health, whilst he, on the contrary, was fair, with light blue eyes, and the pale complexion commonly to be met with in conjunction with auburn-tinted hair.

His features, inherited from his father, were regular and delicate, and by most people Walter Willoughby was considered good-looking.

There were a few, however, who maintained that the expression of his face was not altogether agreeable, and that his chief attraction lay in a remarkably sweet and musical voice. His age, like that of Henry Anderton, was twenty-two.

It had been with the full approbation of his parents that their elder son and heir had fixed his choice upon

Helen Rutherford. The gentle and dutiful girl had already found a warm place in their hearts, and both Sir John and Lady Anderton were prepared to give her a daughter's welcome to their home.

This they were expecting to do on the morrow; for it had been arranged that the young couple should reside in Erleston Grange, and a suite of apartments in that mansion had been set aside for their use. A grand entertainment was to be held there upon the succeeding evening, to which the entire neighbourhood had been invited; and a dramatic performance, to be taken part in by some young farmers, was forming a subject of animated conversation when the Squire abruptly interrupted it.

'Why, where are William and Kate?' he exclaimed, suddenly laying down his knife and fork. 'Tis strange that I missed them not till now. You asked them to sup with us, surely, sweetheart, did you not?'

'Ay, certes, did I, Thomas,' replied his wife; 'and we were talking of their absence ere you returned. Helen was sorely disappointed that Katherine could not be with us this e'en. The dear girl remained behind at the Grange that she might bear William company in case he should go back there, as she reckons he will, i'stead of coming here. He went out early this morning, Sir John says, and has not yet got home.'

'Twas just like Kate to sacrifice herself for the fellow,' murmured Walter, in a tone of some discontent. 'She's ever ready to do aught for William.'

'Ay, that she is, and for others too,' consented Henry heartily. 'But William is a good lad, Walter, and deserves his sister's affection.'

'Well, good lad or no, he's strangely altered of late, as you can't deny, Henry,' returned Walter. 'He has grown as sour as unripe fruit, and will scarce return a civil answer to a civil question.'

‘But where is he, I would lief know? And what was it took him abroad to-day?’ again inquired Squire Rutherford, turning to Sir John.

‘Nay, friend, I can give you no answer to that question,’ replied the Baronet, with an uneasy sigh. ‘But, in truth, something ails the boy; for, as Walter says, he is strangely changed. He was used to have the sweetest and courtliest disposition in the world, as you will all agree, but now he is often testy and impatient. He shuns company too, whenever he can, and takes long walks by himself over the hills, coming back o’ nights pale and weary. ‘Twill be so this evening, I mistrust me.’ And Sir John sighed again, for William was his favourite son.

‘Faith! I have noticed the change myself,’ remarked the Squire, musing. ‘It dates from the time o’ his return from Germany. The air of that country must have disagreed with him sadly. By our Lady, it seems to have poisoned his sunny nature. Can he have aught on his mind, think you?’

‘Nothing wrong, I am right sure,’ affirmed Lady Anderton. ‘But, I fear me my poor son has some secret trouble, though he will not confide it to me; nor, I think, has he done so to any one else.’ And she looked inquiringly at Father Maitland.

‘Nay, ’tis a mystery to me, my daughter,’ remarked the aged priest, shaking his head in answer to the look. ‘I have sought William’s confidence, I own, but he has refused to give it me.’

‘Poor William! I wish he were as happy as I am!’ whispered Henry to his beloved. ‘But, do you know, Helen, I almost fancied this morning that he was displeased with me for some reason, or that he felt envious of my joy. He gave me so strange a look when I spoke of our wedding.’

Helen cast a startled glance at her lover; but perceiv-

ing that his words had no deeper meaning than appeared upon their surface, immediately turned away her head. A slight blush, however, had mantled her cheek ; and whilst further conjectures and surmises as to William's secret passed round the table, she kept her eyes steadily fixed upon her plate. For of those present, this secret was known to her alone, and though painful to have aught to conceal from Henry, she felt that she had no right to betray it.

CHAPTER IV.

A SLIGHT DISAGREEMENT.

AMPLE justice having been done to the meal, our friends returned to the apartment they had occupied before supper. It was a long, narrow room, panelled in black oak, and having three windows set in deep embrasures. A few good paintings hung upon the walls, which were adorned likewise with trophies of the chase, and with certain pieces of old armour which had belonged to a military ancestor of Squire Rutherford. The floor, brightly polished, was spread here and there with mats of fox or deer skins; and the furniture, though in accordance with the fashion of the age—stiff and ungraceful—was richly carved and valuable. As the door unclosed, two men, who had been shown into this room to await their leisure, rose from a sitting posture and respectfully saluted the master of the house and his companions. They bore the relationship of father and son, and were well-known to all, for both were individuals of some consequence in the neighbourhood.

Combining in his own person the respective qualifications of shoemaker, brewer, and tavern-keeper, Master Abel Hardinge had further acquired considerable reputation as a musician; and his skilful performances upon the violin, together with the excellent ale he sold, caused his house to be a favourite resort for the peasantry of the district. This house, which was one of that cluster of cottages we have described as standing by the bridge, not far from

the entrance to the glen, formed also the home of the son who had accompanied him upon this visit. It was through this son that Abel, in a reflected form, had attained his highest honour, for he had been enterprising enough to send the young man to college; and Miles, having passed his curriculum with credit, taken out an apothecary's degree, and served a short apprenticeship to a learned physician, had now returned to practise his profession in his native place. In his capacity as musician, Lady Anderton had engaged Master Hardinge's services for the approaching festivity, at which dancing, it was expected, would be a principal amusement, and it was in order that she might make some further arrangement with him regarding the matter that he had been requested to call this evening at Hall-i'-th'-Wood.

These arrangements completed, the old man departed, leaving his son behind; for Miles, who had fallen into conversation with Master Ashworth, had been invited by Mistress Rutherford to remain for a time, and the company now broke up into little groups.

Drawing his affianced bride within the concealment of one of the deep window recesses, Henry stood with her hand in his, whilst both gazed from the casement. The prospect it afforded was but a limited one, for upon all sides low hills, near at hand, bounded the view. But it was very beautiful, notwithstanding; for those hills were clothed to the summit with the sweet verdure of bursting vegetation, and were now flooded in the soft light of a westering sun. Shadows from the grand larches and wych elms which bordered the avenue lay across the lawn, gracious with the tender greenness of spring, their leaves answering with jubilant fluttering the gentle wooing of the wind, which, though high all day, had fallen with its decline. Overhead, masses of gray clouds had parted, revealing a glimpse of the deep blue vault which arched

far above where they hung, mysterious and awe-inspiring in its grandeur, but bright and hopeful as the future, which, in imagination, stretched before the pair, whose eyes bathed themselves in its fathomless depth.

Nature was in her springtime ; and in the springtime of their lives the happy lovers found a magic sesame which opened to them her beauty, and made her present aspect congenial.

'Twill be a fine day to-morrow, Henry, methinks,' observed Helen, at length breaking the silence. 'See how brightly the sun is setting.'

'Twill be a *bright* day for me, my Helen, fine or no,' responded Henry, 'since 'twill give me *thee*, my life! my light! my love! Ah, Helen, *you* are my sun! You fill the world of my life with your beams. Without you all would be darkness, for you *are* my all.'

'Nay, Henry,' returned Helen gently, a little startled by the unusual passion of his tone, for Henry's nature was too deep to be naturally demonstrative,—nay, Henry, not your *all*, surely. *God* should come first, you know.'

'Ay, truly, my sweet, and so He shall, with us both,' replied Henry, reverently bowing his head. 'But we need not love each other the less that we love Him the more ; for *God is* love, my Helen, and 'tis *Himself* He gives us in our love for one another. Ha! that is the grandest attribute of His nature, Helen,' he continued, speaking slowly, and looking out again with a far-away gaze. 'Love! *That* swallows up all the rest—justice, wisdom, power. *God is love*, and love is sweet.'

'Is it not sweet, my Helen?' he asked, after a pause, and in a different tone, as he once more bent towards her.

Helen lifted her eyes to his, and in their liquid depths he read an answer which needed no interpretation in words ; and drawing her closer, he answered that answer with a kiss.

And now both relapsed into silence. They had tasted the *elixir vitæ*, and were intoxicated with the joyous hopes and anticipations it had produced. Speech was powerless to express the emotions which filled their hearts; but there was no need for that expression, for the hearts beat in unison. So they stood thus together, enjoying one of those moments—so rare in the life of any—when thought, and almost consciousness, are lost in feeling. Every pulse of their being had become a throbbing pleasure. The very light about them was luminous with love; the atmosphere they breathed was like music and poetry in solution; and in the purity of their human love they mounted, as in a chariot of fire, to the throne of the Divine Love, and worshipped.

But imperceptibly, though lengthened by sensation, that moment passed, and the shadows, which had been slowly stretching themselves further and further across the lawn, suddenly blended into one. The sun had gone down behind the hill, sinking into a bed of black and ominous clouds which had waited for him there unseen. Twilight cast the folds of its cold gray veil upon the earth, shrouding her brightness. But no corresponding chill crept over those youthful watchers at the window. If dark clouds were gathering in the horizon of their lives, they, too, remained unseen. If a great evil, like a gigantic Cerberus, loomed behind, dogging with cruel eagerness their flower-besprinkled pathway—and with rapid strides gaining upon them at each instant—it cast no baleful shadow before to rob this happy evening of its bliss; and quitting the recess, as lighted lamps were brought into the room, Henry and Helen approached a table, where Walter Willoughby sat mending a fishing-rod, whilst little Agnes Rutherford stood by superintending the operation with much interest.

The room looked very bright now in the light of the

oil lamps, and very warm too, for the fire, which had been newly replenished with resinous wood, crackled and blazed cheerily.

Upon a high-backed settle drawn up in front of it, for the evening was chilly, though the lovers had not found it so, sat Sir John Anderton and Squire Rutherford. The two gentlemen were engaged in earnest conversation, and in their close proximity presented a striking contrast—the Baronet being, like his elder son, tall and thin, and having iron-gray hair and a mild and dignified countenance; whilst his companion, as we have before noticed, was stout, undersized, and jovial-looking. A corresponding dissimilarity existed in their dispositions. Sir John was gentle and reserved, prone to melancholy and anxiety; the Squire, on the contrary, seldom looked on the dark side of a thing, and, though very affectionate, was self-willed and somewhat choleric.

The disparity in their age was much slighter than might have been judged by their appearance, Sir John having the seniority by only five years; and, notwithstanding the difference in their temperaments, the two had been close friends from childhood.

Unwilling to cloud the peace of the evening by the suggestion of unpleasant ideas, Squire Rutherford had abstained from any general mention of the information he had that afternoon gained respecting the character and antecedents of the new justice of the peace.

But, directly he had found an opportunity of doing so, he had repeated to his distinguished neighbour and gossip the greater part of the conversation which had taken place in the inn at Orrleigh.

Ever ready to anticipate evil, Sir John had allowed himself to be much disturbed by the communication; and had only been distracted from the fears and forebodings it had produced by the introduction, as a subject for con-

versation, of a matter which for some weeks past had been anxiously exercising his mind.

This was the difficulty of rightly disposing of a considerable sum of money which had been intrusted to his care, by a brother, to be used for a particular purpose.

His brother, who was lately deceased, had some years ago suffered banishment from his country for the heinous offence of having entertained a Catholic priest at his house, and had since then resided in South Germany. As a successful merchant he had there gained a small fortune ; and upon being seized with his last illness, he had sent for Sir John in order that he might place this in his hands to be by him applied to the support of missionary priests in England. Sir John, at that time seriously ill himself, had commissioned his younger son to cross the Channel as his substitute ; and thus had been occasioned that absence from home upon William's part to which we have adverted—an absence which, contrary to all expectation, had extended to several months, owing to the fact that over and over again his uncle had rallied when apparently upon the point of death. It was now, however, two months since William had returned from Germany, and the trust money had accordingly been in his father's possession for that length of time. But, as yet, none of it had been applied to the purpose for which it had been bequeathed ; and, naturally solicitous that it should be so without delay, Sir John was consulting with his friend as to the best method of carrying out his brother's wishes.

A suggestion from Squire Rutherford was presently hailed by him with delighted approval. It was to the effect that he should transfer the entire property from his own keeping to that of the Superior of the Society of Jesus, who, that gentleman opined, would know better than he how to apply it to its right uses. To Sir John this idea commended itself highly—not only as affording a relief

from responsibility upon his own part, but also as being a course of which the testator would undoubtedly have approved—for, as he remembered, his brother had been much devoted to that holy and energetic society. There were, however, two obstacles to the carrying out of the plan which presented themselves upon reflection. The one was ignorance as to the abode of the Superior, who, though supposed to be in London, was living in concealment; and the other was the difficulty of fixing upon the messenger who should undertake the dangerous task of conveying to him the money, should his whereabouts be discoverable.

Engaged in an endeavour to find a solution of these questions, the gentlemen fell into silence; and, as they did so, their attention was attracted to an angry altercation going forward in another part of the room, the progress of which, in the interest of their own conversation, they had failed to notice.

The parties concerned in this were Lady Anderton and the young apothecary, Miles Hardinge. Though neither of these two was by nature captious or quarrelsome, they seldom met without disagreement, one or other of them being almost certain to broach a subject which invariably produced it. This subject was physic; and as Miles himself was wont to say, in explanation of the uncomfortable results of any talk with Lady Anderton upon the question, 'Two of a trade never agreed.'

The fact was that the lady had herself studied medicine, or, rather, the strange compound of botany and astrology which in that day was considered necessary for the practice of pharmacy.

Like her husband, of aristocratic birth and descent, Lady Anderton was a very proud, very beautiful, and very learned woman. In addition to her pharmaceutical knowledge, she could read and write in both Latin and French,

•

and had some slight acquaintance with astronomy. It was, however, in the collecting and drying of herbs, the preparation of syrups, decoctions, and powders, that she considered her chief ability to lie. A closet in her house was devoted to the purpose of containing these, as it was her delight to administer the drugs far and near. Moreover, having in many cases been remarkably successful in her prescriptions, she had gained much confidence in the neighbourhood; and, in consequence, had excited the jealousy, and in some measure the dislike, of Miles and his father.

Greatly annoyed by several instances, of late occurrence, in which the wise lady's remedies had been preferred to his own, the young man had, upon this occasion, ventured to use rather bold language in the discussion he was holding with her, and Lady Anderton's pride had risen in resentment.

None the less strong was this resentment from the fact that there had been auditors of the disrespectful manner in which she had been addressed in the persons of the two priests who were seated near her. To these auditors our acquaintances near the fire-place added themselves, as the following words, uttered in a very angry tone, fell upon their ears:

'S death, sirrah, how durst contradict me in that brazen-faced manner! A little modesty, an you had it, might excuse your lack of wisdom; for truly you know naught of that about which you make shift to discourse so sagely. Now, mark me, sir: I repeat again, and I shall constantly maintain it, that herbs which are under the dominion of Mars are better for all diseases of the throat and lungs than are those under Venus: though, as you say, Taurus is her sign, and supposed to rule the throat, Mars cures by antipathy what Venus heals by sympathy. Galen and Hippocrates are on my side, Dioscorides too; and

I care naught for your Matthiolus. To-morrow morning I shall send Robert Mason a decoction of assarabacca leaves, steeped in wine, and boiled with a few drops of laudanum in the water; and I shall make him a plaster of wormwood seed, pounded well, and mixed with a small quantity of troilflower moistened in vinegar: that will cure him, I'll warrant you. And he shall drink a syrup of wormwood and blackthorn when he recovers strength; for, as Camerarius says, in his *Hortus Medicus*, that is the way to keep a man's body in health. Gracious heavens! what good would you do him with your fever-fews and sanicles? None I tell you, none at all.'

'Nay, my lady, you're out o' it there,' responded the young doctor, smiling in a supercilious manner, highly aggravating to his antagonist. 'The best medicine i' the world, I say, for easing the lungs, and relieving a shortness of breath, is a powder of fever-few and oxymel, taken in wine; and there is not to be found under the sun a herb more helpful to the throat than the sanicle of our bounteous lady Venus. A decoction thereof, made of leaves and roots bruised in water, and with a little honey put thereto, maketh an excellent gargle for the disease of ulcers. The whole college of physicians would back me in this proposition, madame; and therefore, by your leave, I decline to submit to your judgment i' the matter.'

'You are an obstinate fellow, Miles,' cried the irate lady, more annoyed by his tone than words, 'and no more fit to give physic than a child.'

'And you, madame, allow your tongue to outrun your politeness,' retorted Miles, losing his temper entirely; 'and let me tell you, my lady, that having studied my profession at college, and practised it under the learned Dr. Caius Green, I have no thought o' stooping to take instruction from your ladyship.'

'Certes, sir, but you do your teaching wondrous small

credit,' remarked Lady Anderton, cooling in the excess of her indignation. 'An Dr. Caius Green be the learned man he is reported, he never taught you to give vervain for yellow jaundice, or rosa solis for sciatica, as you did in Martha Chadwick's case. Out upon you, sir, for an ignorant knave, and an unmannerly one beside!'

Conscious that he had indeed outstepped the bounds of propriety in speaking as he had done, Miles did not at once reply; and taking advantage of the pause, Father Maitland administered a gentle reproof to both disputants.

By both it was taken in good part. With an effort to recover her wonted calmness and dignity of manner, Lady Anderton crossed the room and sat down by Mistress Rutherford's side; and, shortly afterwards, Miles rose to take his leave.

CHAPTER V.

A DANGEROUS GUEST.

EARLY hours were observed in those primitive times, and before ten o'clock, Squire Rutherford's guests had departed, Hall-i'-th'-Wood was in darkness, and every inmate of the house in bed.

The case was not quite the same at Erlestone Grange, for a light still glimmered from an oriel window upon its basement story, and within the room to which it belonged sat Sir John Anderton, his son Henry, and daughter Kate. With the exception of these three, however, the members of this household had likewise retired to rest; and the majority of them had long since fallen asleep.

Ere seeking her couch upon her return from Hall-i'-th'-Wood, Lady Anderton had tarried a few moments to question Kate respecting her younger son, and had learned from her that William had reached home about an hour ago, looking wan and exhausted, and having his breeches and hose covered with mud, as though he had been wading through a bog; that he had met her kind inquiries as to his wanderings with the curt reply that he had been 'taking a long walk;' had laughed, in a strange, joyless kind of way, at her remarks upon his disordered dress; and, refusing to partake of food, had bidden her good night, and gone straight to his chamber.

Less inclined for rest than his lady, but not more distressed by the news than she, Sir John had remained

to have a little further conversation about it with his daughter. So, also, had Henry, to whom his brother's singular conduct was at once a puzzle and grief; and the two gentlemen were afterwards called upon to answer questions which Kate in return put to them about their evening visit.

A true family life was that which—until this first cloud had arisen to mar its peace—had blessed and sanctified the inhabitants of Erlestone Grange! And the soul and centre of it was sweet unselfish Kate. Like the lily of the valley, which seeks the shade in modest concealment of its beauty, yet perfumes the surrounding air with its fragrance, so she, all unconscious of her own charms, and unexacting of personal attention, diffused around her an atmosphere of loving forbearance and disinterestedness. And like the wild convolvulus, which creeps from plant to plant, binding them together with its slender stem, so her unobtrusive affection, encompassing the whole family, united in closer tenderness its other members. But, whilst clinging thus to those about her, Kate Anderton's character was by no means a weak or dependent one. It was, on the contrary, remarkably strong and deep, and though her heart was like an unfathomable well of love, always bubbling up to the surface in some kindly action, her exterior was invariably calm and collected. She was dignified, indeed, with that perfect self-possession which comes only from an entire absence of self-consciousness.

Like her mother, whom she greatly resembled, Kate was endowed with extreme beauty; but in her case the proud look in Lady Anderton's face had been substituted with advantage for her father's mild expression. She was now seated upon a low stool at Sir John's feet, with one arm thrown across his knee. The light of the lamp upon the table close at hand played over her wavy chestnut

hair, and her hazel eyes, which were raised to Henry's face, were full of sympathy with his happiness, as he chatted with her and his father about his bride and approaching nuptials.

To Kate's large nature jealousy and envy were feelings totally unknown, and not once did the idea cross her mind which would have occurred so naturally to others in her situation—viz. that the young girl who was coming to reside in her father's house would in all probability rob her of the privileges and attentions which, as an only daughter, she had hitherto enjoyed. Towards Helen, who had been her companion and bosom friend from childhood, she was incapable of any other sentiment than that of delighted readiness to give her a sister's welcome to Erlestone Grange, and to a warmer place than ever in her own affections.

In the interest of their communings, father and children alike had been oblivious of the passage of time. But as the rude clock of the period marked the hour of twelve, Sir John started up with an exclamation of surprise, and declared that they ought all to have been in bed long ago, and must now retire without delay.

In obedience to his command, Henry forthwith brought some candles from a cabinet upon which they had been standing, and had just succeeded in lighting one by the lamp when a sound, as of low rapping, reached his ear.

'Hark! what is that?' he exclaimed, pausing in the act of presenting the candle to his father. "'Tis like some one knocking upon the outer door—the one nigh by the kitchen. List! I'faith, so it is. Why who can it be, I wonder?'

'Some poor traveller, who has lost his way and taken our good pathway through the glen for a public road,' returned Sir John. 'Or, perchance, one of those

tramping beggars with whom our country is overrun i' these evil times. 'Tis a regular trade now, that of begging—licensed like any other—though, Dame! to be whipped till the blood come, or nailed by the ear to a pillory, are not the pleasantest penalties to be attached to a transgression o' the hard rules laid down i' the license. Marry! our Government has done well: first, to destroy the convents which were wont to afford shelter to the poor and aged and sick; and then to punish them that suffer for the fault! But go, Henry, and see who it is, for the knocking continues.

'Heigho! Katey, 'tis an unhappy land ours,' pursued Sir John, in a melancholy tone, when left alone with his daughter; 'full of wretchedness and crime; with prisons crowded to their roof-trees, and the blood o' the Saints reddening its soil, and crying aloud for vengeance.'

'Nay, dear father, let us rather think that blood is crying for *mercy*,' responded Kate, 'and that from it will arise again, in a richer harvest, the faith for which it was shed. O father, 'tis a glorious cause to suffer for—is our holy religion!' she went on with enthusiasm; 'and I sometimes fear it is in punishment for our sins that we have been so long exempted from persecution in Waradale. Verily, I could almost wish—'

'Hush, hush, child!' interrupted Sir John. 'Utter not that wish, I beseech you. 'Tis nearer the fulfilment, mayhap, than you imagine. For though, truly, we have long escaped from the enemies by whom we are surrounded, 't has been but by a miracle—like that of the closing o' the lions' mouths in Daniel's den; and I greatly mistrust me if there be not those i' Orrleigh ready to inform against us for the love of gold, or, peradventure, from some worse motive, for the new parson, 'tis said, hath already gained a few apostates from among them that

have been living careless lives. And besides, Kate, there is one now living within a few miles of us whose whole life has been passed in the villanous task of hunting out the professors of our faith. He, I trow, can scarcely fail shortly to light upon our priests and church, which i' sooth, I believe, is the only one now i' England where our holy religion is boldly practised.'

'Well, dearest father, an' the stroke of His blessed rod *should* fall upon us at length, I trust we may all have grace given us to say, "God's holy will be done!"' quietly returned Kate. 'We should count it a great joy, you know, to be called upon to suffer affliction with the people of God. Remember you not what our good father said in his instruction last Sunday, father? That *suffering* was no evil, only the *sin* which brought, or inflicted, it was an evil. Suffering itself, he said, was a great and solid good—for 'twas like the ladder of Jacob reaching up to heaven, down which the angels of God descend to strengthen our faith and virtue, and by which we, i' our turn, may mount upwards towards God. 'Twas through *suffering*, he said, that God had made the way to bring us to Himself.'

'Ay, ay, child, I recollect,' replied Sir John; 'and the words are true and beautiful, but not very easy, my Kate, for flesh and blood to believe in or act upon.'

'Father!' broke in Henry, returning at this juncture, and speaking somewhat excitedly, 'prythee come with me to the kitchen at once; and you, too, Kate. 'Tis a poor man, a pedlar, methinks, asking for a morsel of food i' the name of God. And, by my troth, he seems to be well-nigh famished.'

'But, body o' me! where is he?' he cried, in blank astonishment, when, having complied with his request, Sir John and his sister stood with him in the doorway of the huge kitchen. 'Why, where *can* he be?' he continued,

holding aloft the candle which he still retained in his hand. 'Zounds! the man has vanished.'

Equally surprised with himself, his companions' eyes followed his in their search round the vast apartment. But, although fitful shadows, called up by the flickering firelight (and undispelled by the feeble rays of the candle), danced in every direction—giving to the place an eery, haunted look—there was no living thing to be seen.

'I left him sitting upon that chair,' pursued Henry after a pause, pointing to one at some distance. But scarcely had the words left his lips before Kate, who had stooped to peer beneath an immense table which stood between them and the chair indicated, touched him upon the arm, and in a rather frightened whisper, said, 'He is there still, Henry, lying upon the floor beside it.'

'O father, how dreadful this is! The poor man is dead,' she continued, in the same low key, when, after passing round the table, she was bending with her father and brother over the prostrate form.

At a cursory glance it appeared to be as Kate had stated, for the hues of death were upon the man's countenance, his eyes were closed, and his attitude showed entire unconsciousness, but upon a more minute examination it was seen that he had merely fainted.

Directing his son to run for some brandy, Sir John raised the man, who had a small pack strapped upon his shoulders, into a reclining position, and upon Henry's return attempted to administer the stimulant. But it was long before any of it could be made to pass the tightly compressed lips, and still longer before the reviving effects became apparent. There was plenty of time, therefore, to note the outward appearance of the man before the windows of his soul opened and afforded an index to the interior, or speech gave a clue to his character. The result of such a study showed that he was a person con-

siderably above medium height, with broad shoulders and powerful frame—probably about forty years of age. His head, which was large and finely formed, was covered with dark brown hair, with here and there a few threads of gray. His eyes, somewhat deeply set, were overhung by a wide forehead, and his Roman nose and massive chin were of perfect, though not delicate, proportions. Naturally the face would have been a little full, but it was now sunken and pinched with illness or want, and the compressed lips gave it, for the time being, a look of sternness.

Interested in his physiognomy, which was by no means commonplace, and which somehow accorded ill with his poor dress and apparently lowly station, our friends were anxiously endeavouring to recover the stranger from his syncope, when Kate, whose eyes had fallen upon his hands, drew towards them the attention of her companions.

‘O father, father, look here!’ she cried, lifting tenderly a shapeless and disfigured mass; ‘the poor fellow’s hands have been hurt. O see, see!’ she added pitifully, turning up the sleeve of his coarse woollen garment, and exhibiting a wrist whereon two discoloured wheals rose upon either side of a deep indentation.

‘Ha, let go the hand, Kate; don’t touch him, child!’ exclaimed Sir John, involuntarily drawing back a little himself. ‘Perdy! ’tis some criminal! The fellow has been hanged up by the hands to be whipped.’

‘But a good Catholic, notwithstanding, father,’ observed Henry, who had been loosening the seeming pedlar’s doublet at the neck, and who now pointed out an *Agnus Dei* which hung within it attached to a ribbon. ‘Perchance that may explain his condition.’

‘Alack! ’tis very possible, in sooth,’ returned Sir John, repenting of his hasty judgment; ‘but see, my son, he begins to revive. Can you sit up, my worthy man?’ he asked kindly, addressing the stranger, who had now opened

his eyes, which were of a deep blue, and had fixed them upon him in only partial consciousness.

‘What, good Giles, must I be racked again so soon?’ he murmured, in a voice scarcely audible through faintness. ‘Why, ’tis but an hour since I was brought back to my cell. Nathless,’ he went on more distinctly, ‘thank God! I am ready;’ and he strove to rise.

The action completed his restoration; and after looking round for a moment in a bewildered manner, he resumed.

‘Ah, I recollect! Pardon me, gentle sir, but may a poor wanderer beg a morsel of bread for the love of God? I am well-nigh starved, and have a journey to take, upon which I must proceed with despatch.’

‘Nay, friend, you shall not quit my roof again this night,’ protested Sir John firmly, but respectfully—for the stranger’s words had excited in him a suspicion which was soon to be converted into certainty. ‘You are not in fit trim for further travelling. Moreover, you have turned off from the public highway, and will have to retrace your steps for upwards of a mile, or else to make your way o’er the hills by a footpath which you would not easily find i’ the night-time. Content you, therefore, to rest here until the morrow; and if so be you desire it, you shall then set off upon your journey at an early hour.’

Too weak for the moment to offer any opposition to this suggestion, the pedlar allowed Sir John to assist him to a bench fixed inside the massive chimney. A fire still smouldered in the earthen grate; and throwing fresh wood upon it, the Baronet hastened to bring wine, which with his own hands he proceeded to warm and spice. Kate, in the mean time, hurried to the larder in search of food; and quickly spreading it upon a small three-legged table, she lifted the latter, with the assistance of her brother, to the side of their unexpected guest.

A ravenous look came into the stranger's face as he saw the food, and he eagerly stretched towards it his maimed hands. But recollecting himself before he had touched anything, he withdrew them, covered his face for an instant, and reverently made the sign of the cross.

His companions did the same, and a smile of joy crossed his face as he witnessed the action.

'Ah, you are Catholics!' he ejaculated, in a pleased tone.

'Yes, thank God!' returned Sir John, presenting him with the wine, which he had by this time finished preparing. 'And *you*, reverend sir, I suspect are a priest. Prythee, tell me, is it not so?'

'You are right, sir, though I know not how you can have guessed my calling,' replied the other. 'But I will tell you more anon. I must eat,' he concluded, in a feeble voice, almost relapsing into his fainting fit.

'Ay, do, do,' urged Sir John, withdrawing a little with his son and daughter; and, without further invitation, the famished man attacked the provisions. He had the wisdom, however, to restrain his appetite, rendered almost savage with fasting, and, whilst yet scarcely half-satisfied, turned his back upon the table.

Refreshed by the food and wine, the natural expression had returned to his face, and when, upon his addressing them, his companions again gathered around him, they saw that this was indeed no common man. Gravity and energy of character were written in each line about the large, firm mouth, whilst the dark, deep-set eyes showed a susceptibility of emotion, and were, in fact, habitually filled with the flame of charity which consumed him within.

With a grace of language and manner that proved him a gentleman, he thanked his entertainers for their hospitality, and went on afterwards to inform them that he was a priest of the Society of Jesus; that he had a few weeks

ago escaped from Lancaster Castle, where he had lain under sentence of death; but that, pursuivants being now close upon his track, he had little doubt that he should shortly be recaptured. For three nights, he pursued, he had not slept beneath a roof, neither had he, with the exception of a dry crust, tasted food for the same number of days. Since aware how near were his pursuers, he had feared to bring upon any kind friend the terrible penalties inflicted by law upon those who were guilty of harbouring or relieving a priest. Then rising, with a renewal of his grateful thanks, he declared his intention of at once leaving the house, and seeking a shelter from mother earth, who, he said, with a smile, could neither be imprisoned, nor otherwise punished, for affording it to him.

Again, and in a more determined manner than before, Sir John protested that, be the consequences what they might, the persecuted fugitive should not that night leave the house; nor at all, he added, could a safe hiding-place be found within it. And, bidding Henry heap more wood upon the fire, he carefully covered up the kitchen window, so as to prevent any light from penetrating through, and, returning, busied himself in removing the disguising pack from the traveller's wearied shoulders.

'And now, my children,' he said, reseating himself when that task was accomplished, 'we must think of some place of concealment. O, that we had some secret chamber i' the house! But I little thought ever to have needed one, or to have had to hide a minister of God. But come, let us see,' he pondered, knitting his brow anxiously, 'there is that room i' the old tower, Henry; what think you of that? We could remove the ladder, you know; but the floor, I fear me is sadly worm-eaten and crumbling, and part o' the roof is open to the sky.'

'Ay, father, 'tis in an unsafe condition, I warrant,' returned his son; 'and, besides, 'twould scarce pass un-

noticed if the house were searched, for the door still hangs on its hinges, and is plain to be seen from below.'

'Nay, it would not do at all,' affirmed Kate; 'but there is that small closet in the green room, father,' she suggested; 'could we not hang the walls all round with tapestry, and—'

'No, no, I have it, I have it!' interposed Sir John, in some excitement. 'The best hiding-place i' the world! Truly, it must have been God Almighty Himself who directed your steps hither, good father. Marry, I'll defy all the Protestant bloodhounds in Christendom to hunt you out of my house. But come,' he added, in the same cheerful tone, 'and judge for yourself if it be not an excellent concealment I can offer you.'

Acquiescing in the request with a quiet smile, the priest rose; and seizing the candle, Sir John, followed by him and by Henry and Kate full of curiosity, led the way across a flagged quadrangle, and turning down a narrow passage, threw open a door at its termination, and ushered his companions into a small chapel. All knelt for a moment before the altar. Then, turning up a carpet of tapestry which covered them, Sir John exposed to view three stone steps which conducted to the sanctuary, and facing round, triumphantly inquired, 'There, what think ye of that?'

The stranger gazed at his questioner in surprise, for here certainly was no sign of any place of concealment; but Henry, who had at first appeared to share in his astonishment, presently gave vent to an exclamation of intelligence and satisfaction, and springing forward with the words, 'The old vault, the old vault! Good my father, 'twas well thought on!' threw himself on his knees by his father's side; for Sir John, having stooped down, was now carefully inspecting the lowest step.

'It turns upon a pivot, Henry,' he remarked, [in sup-

pressed eagerness, 'it turns upon a pivot; but it has not been opened these eighty years, and will, in all likelihood, be stiff and rusty. Here, this is the side, my son. Push now, and prythee use all thy force.'

Henry did as he was desired; and yielding to the pressure of four strong arms, the stone slowly gave way, and, moving forward with a grating sound, disclosed a yawning cavern, with some broken steps leading downwards. At her father's bidding, Kate brought the candle, and after peering into it from above, the gentlemen descended to examine the vault more closely.

It was of considerable extent, undermining the ground to some distance beyond the chapel, and though not entirely filled, the coffins were numerous; and it had long since ceased to be used as the family burying-place. Being all either of stone or lead, however, the sarcophagi emitted no unhealthy or offensive odour; but the vault was somewhat damp, and the air close and heavy with long confinement. Leaving it open, therefore, to the purer atmosphere, the little party, at Sir John's suggestion, returned for a time to the kitchen; and the priest, having expressed perfect agreement with his host as to the excellence of the hiding-place, and having gratefully accepted the security it offered, now introduced himself more fully to his new friends, and so aroused their interest, that they could not rest satisfied until, by dint of persuasions and questionings, they had drawn from him the story of his life.

This we will relate in our own words, and in an exceedingly abridged form.

Father John Christopher was born in the neighbourhood of Durham, of wealthy Protestant parents, and having received a tolerably good education, was sent, at the age of twenty, to study jurisprudence in London. Interested in the science, he threw all the fiery energy

of his nature into the pursuit; bending, morning, noon, and night over his books and papers, and refusing himself all recreation whatsoever. A long and serious illness was the result of this over-application; and yielding to the persuasion of his parents, who could not endure the thought of his returning to his former occupation, he agreed to relinquish it, and to choose the Church as his profession. Accordingly, some few years after Elizabeth's accession to the throne, he entered upon a collegiate course at Cambridge, that university being selected in preference to Oxford on account of its having embraced more strongly the Protestant cause. But his theological books did not prove so absorbing to young Christopher as those of the law had done, and he now plunged eagerly into society, unfortunately of a doubtful description. Contracting a strong friendship with a college companion named Wilfred Harcourt, a young man of superior intelligence, but wild and dissipated habits, he found in him a willing aider and abettor in folly. The two friends soon became noted, even in the not over-scrupulous community to which they belonged, for extravagant and reckless indulgence in all manner of evil courses, and both were upon the verge of expulsion from the university, when Wilfred Harcourt suddenly stopped short in his mad career, and became an entirely altered character. Surprised and greatly annoyed by the change in his companion, Christopher sought to fathom its reason or motive; but for some time in vain. At length, however, his persistency triumphed, and unable to resist his repeated interrogations, Harcourt revealed to him the fact that he had become a member of the Catholic Church. Inexpressibly shocked and dismayed, Christopher pressed for further information upon the subject, and learned, under promise of secrecy, that it was to a Jesuit father, staying, under the disguise of a private gentleman, at the house of an

acquaintance, that, under God, the conversion was owing. Believing himself to be well versed in polemics, and hoping by this means to reclaim his companion to Protestantism, Christopher proposed that the latter should obtain for him an introduction to the priest of whom he had spoken, and that he should be present whilst he held with him discussions upon religious questions. With this suggestion Harcourt willingly complied, and the result proved to be that which he had anticipated, and for which he had earnestly prayed—Christopher, also, became a Catholic. Unable to conceal their change of faith, and in danger of losing their lives on its account, the two young men now fled from Cambridge; and having a vocation to the priesthood, presented themselves at the seminary at Rheims, and were admitted as candidates for Holy Orders. Here, at the close of a few years they had parted—never in this world to meet again; for Wilfred Harcourt, shortly after his ordination, died in an English prison from the effects of prolonged torture, unflinchingly borne for his Master's sake. Christopher, meantime, having embraced the religious state, and passed his novitiate in Rome, had become an ardent and devoted member of the Society of Jesus. His probationship completed, he had been sent upon the mission to England; and, during a storm encountered upon the voyage thither, had been made the happy instrument in the conversion of a gentleman of high rank. Entering the country as a friend of his fellow-traveller, he had remained upwards of nine months at his house, unsuspected by the law authorities, and enabled to do much good. Sixty persons, in addition to the entire household of his host, it had, within this period, been his joyful task to 'reconcile to the Church of Rome,' as the legal jargon of the time ran. An accidental encounter with a former acquaintance at Cambridge had led at length to his betrayal; and after a short imprisonment he had

been banished the country. He had, however, immediately returned to it; and having speedily rendered himself notorious for zeal and sanctity, and for his success in effecting conversions, a heavy reward had been offered for his recapture. This having been effected, he had been brought before the tribunal of his country, condemned to death as a Jesuit priest, and confined, pending the execution of the sentence, in Lancaster Gaol. But even in prison Father Christopher had been privileged to be of service to the cause he had so much at heart, and an under-warden of the castle had become another star in the crown of one who had turned many souls to God. To his distress, this man, who was a sincere convert, had contrived a plan for his escape, and found means of providing him with a disguise; and though heart-broken at the loss of the honour of martyrdom, which had appeared so imminent, he had felt it his duty to accept the proffered liberty. Leaving the prison by night-fall, therefore, the zealous priest had once more gone about exercising his holy calling as he travelled southwards. For some time no signs had appeared that he was followed; but three days ago he had heard of the pursuivants as close at hand, and since then had only escaped them by a series of accidents which seemed almost miraculous. That very evening, as he stated in conclusion, he had well-nigh fallen into their clutches, for, as he lay behind a hedge, waiting for dusk, in order that he might continue his flight, he had seen them enter a house which stood almost within a stone's throw of him. This house, from his description of it, his listeners recognised as Ridgwood Manor.

As may be believed, the small hours of the morning were far advanced before Father Christopher had finished this narration, and soliciting pardon for having kept his interested audience so long from rest, the good priest now proposed to retire to his hiding-place without delay.

An adjournment to the chapel accordingly took place ; and Henry, having brought from above stairs a straw mattress and several coverlets, these were deposited in the vault, together with a lamp, means for lighting and trimming it, and also some food and wine. The latter necessities were added to the rest on account of a resolution which had been come to, that until all danger of a visit from the pursuivants had passed, no person, save those already informed of it, was to know of Father Christopher's presence within the house. It was, however, no fear of betrayal which had actuated this decision. It had simply been arrived at in accordance with a wise suggestion from Kate, who considered that, if in real ignorance of it, a denial by other members of the household of all knowledge of the fugitive and his whereabouts would be more natural and easy.

Kneeling once more before the tabernacle, each of the four spent a few moments in silent prayer, and after bestowing a blessing upon his companions, Father Christopher descended alone into the vault. The stone was then rolled back into its place ; and when all traces of its disturbance had been carefully removed, the carpet was replaced above it, and creeping quietly up-stairs, the rest separated for their respective chambers.

CHAPTER VI.

WILLIAM ANDERTON'S SECRET.

WHEN William Anderton left home upon the morning of the day on which the events we have recorded took place, it was with no explicit intention of not returning until the evening. A restless anguish of mind drove him to seek relief in bodily exercise, and the same cause rendered him oblivious of the speed at which he walked, or the distance he traversed. Quitting the glen by a rough pathway over the nearest hill, he strode on with hasty, impatient steps, neither knowing nor caring whither he went. The scenery through which he passed, radiant though it was in the first flush of spring beauty, gave him no delight. With the apathy of wretchedness, his eyes wandered over green forests exuberant with freshness; over orchards covered with bloom, picturesque farm cottages; and meadows alive with browsing cattle and playful lambs. No joy entered his soul through the doorway of his senses, as the sweet perfume of the yellow primrose greeted him, or the air grew rich with the fragrance of the wild hyacinth, carpeting the ground with a lovely, translucent blue, which shimmered in the sunlight as it fell beneath the trees. No inclination seized him to stoop in admiration over the delicately-pencilled anemone as he mounted a wooden slope; nor was he tempted to linger for a moment, when, upon reaching the uplands, the golden glitter of a sea of narcissi burst upon his view. Alas! had he done so, its glory would

not, as in former days, have thrilled through his being, for that within him, of which the sweet wild flowers were typical, was dead. Withered and desolate lay the garden of his hopes, and he had lost the power of discerning Nature's charms. His soul was out of harmony with spring, and all the glamour and mystery of it had vanished. Even the song of the birds had grown harsh and discordant to his ear, untuned by suffering; and there was no poetry now in the rhythmical changes of cloud and sky, since in his own breast was no responsive melody. Everything was dreary, commonplace, joyless; for the glow had departed from his life, and, with it, light and gladness had gone out of the world. Spring and summer for him had ceased to exist. The 'winter of his discontent' swallowed them up. So he strode on, blind to all the loveliness around, conscious only that the wind was cold, and that he shivered with keen internal misery. At length, some hours after midday, he entered a narrow valley, or rather cleft, ascending gently between the low, bleak hills. A shallow stream made its way downwards, gurgling placidly over stones, or springing now and again down a few feet of precipice. Following, in an upward direction, the course of this stream, William came presently upon a little tarn lying still and deep in a hollow, overhung by trees and shadowed by grass-grown terraces of rock. Upon its banks he threw himself down to rest, and as he lay there brooding over its cause, his agony grew within him, until it and the loneliness of the place became almost unsupportable. Poor fellow! he was only twenty, and into his life, unused to grief or disappointment, had fallen a first sharp sorrow. In his inexperience he imagined the pain of it would be eternal. Already, indeed, it appeared to have endured for untold ages. And yet it was but two months since the blow had been

struck which had severed him, as he thought, for ever, from his youth and happiness. As the reader will doubtless have conjectured, unhappy love was the poison which was embittering the well-spring of William Anderton's joy, and that love was bestowed upon his brother's promised bride. Thrown into constant association with her, his attachment to Helen Rutherford, commencing in childhood, had grown with his growth, and strengthened with his strength. It was not, however, until just before his departure for Germany upon the errand to which we have adverted, that he became conscious of the fact, that a change had been wrought by late years in its nature—that it was no longer with the love of a brother or friend that he regarded her, but with the absorbing passion which a man feels for her who is the one woman in the world to him. But resolved to make assurance doubly sure upon this point, and little dreaming that he had a rival in his undemonstrative brother Henry, William determined to try the test of what he conceived would be a short absence before disclosing to Helen the state of his feelings. The test proved to him that his love was even stronger than he imagined; and when at length, released from his prolonged attendance upon his uncle, he hastened home, his ecstasy in the anticipation of reunion was so great, that he felt as if steeped to the very lips in gladness. Like a lark soaring upwards to meet the sun, his heart trilled a wild song of joy and freedom, as, at the termination of his journey, he entered the glen upon horseback, and rode up to Hall-i'-th'-Wood. Helen, it happened, was alone in the garden at the time, and catching a glimpse of her dress where she sat upon a rustic bench, William fastened his horse with trembling haste to the gate-post, and with a cry of delight flew to her side. A few moments afterwards he returned, quietly remounted his horse, and set its head in the direction of

Erleston Grange. He had a strange kind of feeling, as though at the touch of some sorcerer he had been transformed into stone, and that never again would he be able to experience pain or pleasure, or aught else than the dreary deadness to all sensation which at present oppressed him. But the stroke had stunned but for a time, and ere long his strong, passionate nature awoke. Then deep called unto deep in his soul; the waves and the billows went over his head. At first, however—actuated by affection for his brother, as well as by an intense pride, which, though it had never as yet exhibited itself in an unpleasant form, was one of his chief characteristics—he struggled bravely to overcome his misplaced attachment. But the effort, made in his own strength, signally failed. Instead of decreasing, his unfortunate passion only grew stronger with resistance, and though he managed to conceal his wound from all eyes, he could not hide the bitterness its corroding gangrene produced. Still, it was not until *sin* had been added to sorrow—till William had begun to *hate* his brother—that the lowest depth of his wretchedness was reached. But this had happened to him now; and as, sitting by the quiet pool, he looked down into his heart, he saw there a lurid gulf of capability for crime, in which lurked the black demon of jealousy. Terrified at the sight of this monster, and almost maddened by the thought of what he must endure when called upon to be a daily witness of Henry's married happiness, William sprang up with a despairing cry to God for help.

But Heaven seemed to be deaf to his appeal. No comfort came in answer to the supplication, and bitter rebellious feelings rose in his heart against his Maker. For the first time in his life, a curse broke from his lips. Yet the God whom he cursed—He who is not far from any one of us—was even then preparing a doorway of

escape from his trouble. A true relief, both human and divine, was at hand. Out of the baptism of suffering, William was destined to emerge a king amongst men. But that could not be until he had learned to recognise God in the overshadowing cloud—One like unto the Son of Man by his side in the fiery furnace. And that end was not yet. With a mind writhing in speechless agony, he turned to fly from the place, for the loneliness of it was becoming awful. A stick which he carried had fallen from his hand; and as he stooped to pick it up, the gleam of the pool caught his eyes. An idea, sudden and terrible, caused them to dilate, drove the blood from his cheeks, and left him ashen-white. Eagerly he descended the steep bank, and sought to fathom the depth of the tarn with his stick. The bottom was beyond his reach. Withdrawing the stick with a murmur of satisfaction, he stood leaning upon it, watching the concentric rings and ripples its insertion had created, and longing with growing desire for the deceitful repose of the dark water. At length his resolution was taken. Advancing a step, he once more bent over the pool. It had again become motionless, and a softened reflection of his handsome face—no longer disturbed by pain, but calmed by the strength of his determination—was sent back to him from the placid surface. Trembling with awe he started backwards. His resemblance to his sister was great; and it was *Kate's* face, not his own, which had appeared to be mirrored there. Out of the depths of the still water she had seemed to look up to him, with sad reproachful eyes. A wan smile crossed his face as the illusion vanished. But the reflection had acted as a messenger from God, and the thought of his sister saved him. Hurriedly crossing himself, he sped from this valley of the shadow of death, and, unheeding of his steps, in his haste to get out of the vicinity of his temptation, presently found himself sink-

ing up to the knees in a morass. The struggle to emerge from this brought him to a fuller consciousness of his position, and guiding himself by the sun, he now turned in a homeward direction. Not sure of his way, however, he called at a cottage which he passed, in order to make inquiries concerning it. Noting his pallor and thinking he must be weary or faint, the kind-hearted woman who answered his questions brought him an earthenware cup of milk and some rye-bread, and warmly pressed them upon him. Yielding to her solicitation, William took the milk, and the acceptance of the kindness did him more good than the refreshment. As he walked away from the cottage he felt glad that he had not drowned himself, and thus brought horror and affliction into his home. The icy selfishness of unhallowed grief began to dissolve a little. Under the influence of the suggested recollection of his sister's affection, and through the sympathetic kindness of a stranger, he had been lifted a few steps upwards from the mire of despondency in which he was sunken. For the first time in many days his heart turned towards his family. The love of parents and sister grew grateful to his mind, and a glimmer of hope arose that, in their affection and through the return he would strive to make to it, he might yet find some consolation for the absence of that for which his whole nature ached and yearned. But only like a faint starlight breaking the night of his gloom came the comfort which these thoughts and resolutions afforded. The *sun* must rise ere William's day could return. Out of Gilead there was no balm which would suffice to heal his torn and bleeding spirit. Earthly means would never avail to drive out the pride and passion which tortured him. Neither reason nor judgment could set his heart at rest. It needed a vision, a revelation, addressed directly to his higher spiritual nature. It needed that the windows of his soul should be unclosed,

were it but for a moment, and that it should be given him to see above the dark chaos of his own tumultuous passions, above the seething sea of the wrongs, and injustices, and sorrow, and sins of the world, a Mighty Presence brooding calm and majestic, the embodiment of harmony and concord. It needed that the *God of Peace* should manifest Himself ere the wings of his misery would fold themselves and the storm in his heart grow still. And to all of us, at some time or other of our lives, comes such a vision or manifestation. Abraham and Moses were not favoured alone, of all the human race, to stand face to face with the Almighty. In the memory of each human being is some blessed mount of God—some Horeb—where he has stood sheltered in the cleft of a rock, and known that *He* was passing by. Whether to his joy or condemnation, whether met by the loving obedience of a child, or by the hatred and disregard of a self-elected enemy, the 'still small voice' has been heard by the inner ear of every man. As a rule, such visitations or direct personal communications from God are heralded by no miraculous premonition. Often, however, a *preparation* is needed for them. We must be led out into the *wilderness of desolation* in order to find the burning bush. An *earthquake* must be sent to disturb our false security, a *devastating storm* to sweep over our earthly Eden, a *mighty wind* to throw from its pedestal our cherished idol, ere we can be made to listen to the voice of God. But that voice itself is 'still' and 'small,' and it comes to us in quiet and simple ways, sometimes through the inspiration of a thought, often through the word of God's minister, oftener still through the sacraments of the Church—the ordinary channels of grace. To William Anderton it came in a somewhat singular manner, though through means in no respect unusual.

Worn out with mental excitement and bodily fatigue,

he had, upon reaching his room, thrown himself on the bed—dressed with the exception of his shoes and outer garment. But to rest or sleep was impossible. In the darkness and silence of his chamber his agony had risen again with vital force, beating down the feeble barriers with which he had sought to hem it in. He *could not* lie still; and springing up, forgetful of his weariness, he began to pace the room to and fro like a caged wild beast in excitement. At length, clasping his hands above his head, he cried aloud, in the supremacy of his distress, 'O God, my pain is greater than I can bear!' Scarcely had the words left his lips when he stood transfixed. Out from the wall in front of him had started a crucifix, invisible the moment before, but now defined, clear and distinct, in a pale lambent light. Awe, greater than that he had felt when Kate's face looked up to his from the quiet tarn, seized him. Brave though he was, William shuddered with fear. In the next instant, however, he discovered that what had appeared to be a miraculous manifestation was the most simple and explainable of phenomena. The moon, which had risen some time ago, had suddenly emerged from behind the clouds, by which hitherto her light had been completely obscured, and from the position of the room, her rays had fallen obliquely upon the exact spot where hung the crucifix.

But, although no miracle, this thing had not happened to William Anderton by chance. Natural objects may be, and often are, made to become supernatural agents. Those moonlight rays were winged messengers, sent direct from the throne of God. They whispered their errand to the silent crucifix; it flashed into light and spoke; and its voice was the voice of the Most High.

As William stood, riveted to the same spot, gazing on the representation of the suffering God-Man—of Him whose face was 'marred more than any man's'—his heart

suddenly melted within him. The shadow of an unspeakable pity had fallen upon him. All at once he had come upon a 'great rock in a weary land;' he had found a covert from the tempest, a refuge from the storm. *God loved him.* So loved him that He had given His very life for love. In the stillness of his darkened chamber, with the image of the crucified Lord of Life standing out clear in the moonlight, William felt this as he had never felt it before. He *realised* it. Face to face he stood with the overwhelming thought. Then the walls of his pride shook, bowed themselves, and fell—never again to rise up and shut God out of his heart. Tears rained from his eyes, and creeping to the foot of the cross he knelt there in wordless prayer and thanksgiving. The sting had been extracted from his misery, for he saw that a love passing the love of woman encompassed him. Consciously, in that ineffable moment, he floated in the ocean of divine charity which surrounds each and all of God's creatures—though, alas, so many of us, with blinded eyes and hearts hermetically sealed by sin and folly, toss, empty vessels, in the boundless flood, and perish, not within reach of the water of life, but in the very midst of it. But although in sight of the stupendous love which was his without asking for—the love of the Father-God, infinite as Himself—William saw the comparative insignificance of the human love he had so madly coveted, he did not undervalue it. He felt even now that it would be sweet to possess it, and he knew that the longing for it would return—intense perhaps, and painful. But once for all he had learned—and the power of the lesson never vanished—that God was the author and sender of his griefs as well as his joys; that He was at the heart of every-thing—above all and in all that had ever happened to him. Knowing this, his pain could never again torture or madden. 'It might remain a mystery indeed, but the key

to the mystery was in the hands of His Father, and he could trust Him. So he bowed his head in submission, resolved henceforward to know no will but the will of God. Youth and happiness, he thought, might be gone, but God knew his sorrow, and He who Himself had drunk the cup of suffering to the dregs would help him to be a man patient to bear, and strong to will and do the right.

The resolution brought its own reward. Inevitably. For never does any particular result follow a specific cause with more certainty than does there come to the heartfelt prayer, 'Thy will be done,' the rapture-breathing response, 'My peace I give unto thee.' The one is the natural and unfailing sequence of the other. With these words ringing sweet changes in his innermost heart, William rose from his knees, and, opening the casement of his room, stood looking out into the night. The moon, three-quarters full, and surrounded by a watery halo, had now become somewhat hazy, but it gave, notwithstanding, sufficient light to enable him to distinguish the principal features of the familiar landscape. In front of him stretched the soft rounded swell of the hills, dark with their drapery of wood. To his left rose the precipitous crags which shut in the glen; and below him lay the park-like grounds, dotted here and there with clusters of chestnut trees or stately and solitary elms. The night was still and calm, and from every quarter of the quiet scene came echoing back the words which filled his heart, 'My peace I give unto thee.' The hills seemed to sing them as a soothing lullaby, and the trees, rustling gently in the wind, took up the refrain. A thousand voices of the night repeated them in melodious cadence, and the very atmosphere grew alive with the whisperings of them—'My peace I give unto thee'—'My peace I give unto thee.' Closing the window William knelt once more

before the crucifix, which, now that its mission was accomplished, had retired into shadow. Then, undressing, he laid his head upon the pillow, and had scarcely touched it ere he slept.

The comfortings of our Perfect God are comfortings indeed !

CHAPTER VII.

THE MARRIAGE INTERRUPTED.

THREE hundred years ago a halo round the moon betokened wet weather just as surely as such a sign does now ; and when Helen Rutherford awoke upon the morning of her wedding-day, the rain was beating fiercely against the latticed windows of her room, and streaming in broad sheets down the pointed roof of the house. The trees in the avenue, battered by a shifting and boisterous wind, swayed heavily from side to side. Little brooklets coursed over the already sodden ground, and opaque leaden-coloured clouds stretched overhead. Not a rift appeared in them—not the faintest glimmer of blue or brightness to break the monotony of dull misty gray. It seemed hopeless to expect a clearing up ; and as the forenoon advanced, a general depression of spirits was felt at Hall-i'-th'-Wood, the dismal day being looked upon as an ill-omen for the happiness of the marriage. In spite, however, of the wretched weather, there was no lack of cheerfulness at Erleston Grange, and thanks for that were in a great measure due to Lady Anderton. Having made a careful study of the heavens, that lady, who was considered an undoubted authority upon all matters of occult science, had predicted that before three in the afternoon—the hour fixed for the wedding—the rain would have ceased, and that in all probability the sun would be shining. To ordinary observation the prophecy appeared most unlikely of fulfilment, but accustomed to receive the

learned lady's opinions upon such points without questionings, the entire household had nevertheless grown sanguine on the faith of her word. Moreover, from an early hour such a lively bustle and confusion of business prevailed within the mansion that there was but little time for any of its inmates to give attention to the aspect of things without. In preparation for the grand feast of the evening, culinary mysteries upon an extensive scale were being enacted in the kitchen; tressel tables for temporary use were being set up in the dining-hall, and in the ballroom polishing and decorating were going forward. Busiest amongst the busy was Kate; whilst Lady Anderton too moved about in her stately fashion, directing and superintending everywhere; for in the days of Queen Elizabeth, ladies even of rank and title did not disdain to take a practical interest in household affairs. The most useless, and decidedly the most restless, person in the establishment was the expectant bridegroom. Anxious to visit his *fiancée*, but prevented from doing so by the continuous downpour—or rather by his mother's entreaties that he would not venture out in it—Henry was fidgeting away the hours of the morning at a window from which he could just see the chimneys of Hall-i'-th'-Wood. But Henry Anderton's impatience of the rain was mild in comparison with that felt with regard to it by the newly-appointed rector of Orrleigh. That gentleman also desired to go out; but, as the walk he meditated was a long one, he shrank from undertaking it in this heavy downfall. The importance of his errand, however, and the pleasure which he anticipated in its execution, overcame in the end his reluctance to encounter the disagreeableness and inconvenience of a wetting. Accordingly, a little before noon, the Rev. Silas Featherstone might have been seen, closely wrapped in his mantle, making his way along an ill-kept road which led away

from the town. His destination was Ridgwood Manor, and in his breast was a paper upon which he had, on the evening before, taken down, from the lips of an apostate Judas, certain clear instructions respecting the situation of the Catholic church at Waradale, together with a full description of its two priests. Upon whatever grounds Lady Anderton's opinion with reference to the weather had been formed, it turned out to be strictly correct. About one o'clock the clouds began to break; by two the rain had altogether ceased; and when the wedding party assembled in St. Michael's Church the sun was shining brilliantly. Through a painting in front of them its rays fell upon the youthful couple, lighting up the sweet face of the bride, and playing over the manly figure of the bridegroom, as, full of happiness, they stood before the altar. Detained by an unavoidable engagement, Father Maitland was a little late in robing, but he presently made his appearance, and, opening his book, commenced the service. He had uttered but very few words of it, however, before the sound of numerous footsteps approaching betokened a large increase of the spectators who already occupied the building. Very noisy were the new comers, and as they drew nearer loud laughter and unknown voices made themselves audible. Mingling also with the vocal uproar might be distinguished the report of clanging weapons. As this struck upon his ear, Father Maitland looked up from his book and paused, whilst instinctively each individual in the congregation (which consisted of nearly all the peasantry of the district) rose to his feet, and with an anxious and expectant gaze every face was turned upon the door. The inquiring attitude found a speedy reply. With a rough push the half-closed door was thrown open, and preceded by three gentlemen, a company of armed men trooped into the sacred edifice.

'Well, but this is a pretty picture, i' good sooth !' ex-

claimed the foremost of the three gentlemen, stopping short at the end of a few steps and looking triumphantly round the church. 'As foul a nest of Papists as ever I saw! And there stands the old bird, I declare, rigged out in fine plumage, and muttering his hocus-pocus nonsense over a pair o' young fledglings.'

'Methinks, however, the illegal rite hath not been completed,' remarked the second gentleman, who was the under-sheriff of Lancashire, and whose countenance bore the stamp of somewhat better breeding than was depicted upon that of the man who had just spoken; 'and i' that case, Master Windwood, we must put a stop to the wedding, as in duty bound.'

'Ay, certes, we'll stop it, trust-me,' returned the other, laughing; 'and we'll give this Reverend Father an invitation to accompany us back to Ridgwood Manor, Master Sheriff. That'll please him, mayhap, better than sitting down to a feast o' fat things at its conclusion. But where, good sir, is the other mass-monger?' he inquired, turning abruptly to the third gentleman, who was standing within the shadow of a massive pillar. 'I don't see him here.'

'Truly, sir, I fear me that the younger priest of Baal is indeed not present,' replied the individual addressed. 'Mine eye hath in vain searched this temple of idols for his person.'

'A plague take him! 'tis very provoking. Howsoever we'll have a hunt for him by and by. We must catch the whole trio o' these renegades before we leave Waradale—for I'll be sworn that Jesuit fox has run to earth in some hole of the valley. But come, let's to business.' So saying, and still taking precedence of the younger but higher functionary, the justice of the peace advanced up the aisle—keeping his hat upon his head, as in imitation of him did all his companions—and placing himself in front of

Father Maitland, thus disrespectfully addressed him : ' Now then, old gentleman, you're our prisoner. So look you make no useless disturbance about it, but surrender at once. We've caught you in a place that tells its own tale, ye see, surrounded by the objects o' your idolatrous worship, and clothed i' the trappings of your infernal and treasonable calling. 'Twould be an idle trick, therefore, an you were to deny that you are a massing priest.'

' I have no wish to deny the fact of which you speak, sir,' returned the aged priest, with dignity. ' I *am* a priest, undoubtedly; and if you have any authority for arresting me upon that ground I will accompany you without resistance, provided that you will first allow me to finish the office in which I am engaged.'

' Finish the office in which you are engaged, forsooth !' repeated Master Windwood scornfully. ' By Zeus, that is a bare-faced request ! Surely, sir, you don't expect an officer o' justice to stand quietly by, and render himself *particeps criminis* by allowing an infringement o' the statutes to take place beneath his very nose. Perdy, man, don't you know that a Popish wedding is a forbidden luxury ?'

' Nathless,' he resumed, after a pause spent in consultation with his companion, ' the young couple shall be married straightway, and in accordance with the law of the realm. So deliver up that book, master priest, and stand aside. This reverend gentleman, will tie up the connubial knot without delay. We are in a merciful mood to-day, and for all they are both doubtless rank Papists, we will not have the cruelty to disappoint the loving pair. So come, Master Featherstone, and prithee make short work of it, for the worthy sheriff consents to put off our own matters till the job is complete.' A smile flitted across his heavy-jawed disagreeable face, as, in obedience to this request, the Rev. Silas Featherstone stepped forward

and took Father Maitland's vacant place—for, at a signal from the sheriff, two men had roughly seized the latter, and thrusting him aside now stood guarding him upon either hand.

Drawing himself up to his full height, and clasping within his own the hand of his betrothed bride, Henry Anderton indignantly refused the proffered service, and his action was followed by an approving cheer from each Catholic present.

Hitherto, with the exception of certain wrathful mutterings, there had been no demonstration of the sentiments with which the scene enacted before them was regarded by the spectators. But with each instant the slowly-roused but fierce bucolic blood was mounting, and as Anthony Windwood's eye wandered over the assembly, and marked the flashing eyes and clenched fists which spoke of excitement and rising passion, he quailed before the spirit he had evoked—for like all bullies he was an arrant coward. Reassured, however, by a glance at the dense cluster of well-armed men by whom he was surrounded, he gave vent to his annoyance at the contemptuous declining of his proposition, and savagely exclaimed :

'Curses on the spawn of Satan ! let them take the consequence o' their refusal then ; let them do without marriage. They *won't* have a lawful wedding, and they *sha'n't* have an unlawful one ; so let's make no more ado about the matter, but proceed with our mission.'

'Nay, tarry a moment, Master Windwood, an you please,' interposed the sheriff, laying his hand on that gentleman's arm as he was about to issue some order. 'I should like, by your leave, to say a few words to our friends now. I have an offer to make i' my turn. Hearken now, good people,' he continued, mounting upon the altar-steps in order to be the better heard. 'As Popish recusants taken i' the very act of disobeying the law, you

have incurred a heavy penalty. But seeing that as yet you have had no opportunity of hearing the truth, or of learning to detest those practices which, by her gracious and godly Majesty and the Houses o' Parliament, have been truly declared treasonable and idolatrous, I can warrant you gentle treatment. If, therefore, any o' your number will save us a little trouble, by saying where that traitorous Jesuit rebel, whom we have tracked to your valley, lies hidden, he shall earn a large reward for himself, and a complete overlooking of all past transgressions for his neighbours.'

Scarcely pleased with the conciliatory tone of this address, the more brusque-mannered justice acquiesced nevertheless in the promises it contained. But where no information was possessed, none as a matter of course could be given; and all addressed save three, whose silence remained unnoticed amidst the general clamour, denied with perfect truth all knowledge of the fugitive.

Professing to disbelieve the asseverations of ignorance, and probably doing so in reality, Anthony Windwood again begged that no further time might be wasted in useless parley. 'Every corner of this district,' he continued, in a threatening tone, 'will now be diligently searched, and woe betide the owner o' that house or cottage wherein the Jesuit shall be found. It will be an ill day for him, I warrant, when the law gets him in his grip! For by my word, good people, the punishment for harbouring or relieving a priest is no light one; 'tis, as perchance you know, *hanging, drawing, and quartering*. And now, my men,' he concluded, turning to the armed pursuivants, 'let us, before we depart hence, reduce this place with all haste to some sort o' decency.'

'Verily, that is a good work in which I shall myself most heartily engage,' remarked the Rev. Silas Featherstone, with unction. 'The sight of these graven images

and molten calves hath been a sore offence to mine eyes, and the odour of incense which lingereth in this house of Rimmon is as a stinking savour in my nostrils. O come,' he went on, with growing enthusiasm, 'let us forthwith arise, and fight for the Lord our God! Let us break in pieces their idols; yea, let us utterly destroy them!' And mounting as he spoke upon a bench close at hand, he gleefully proceeded, with Master Windwood's assistance, to overturn from its pedestal a statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which, being composed of some fragile material, fell shivered to fragments upon the marble pavement beneath. Other images and crucifixes shared a similar fate; those of the latter which were of wood being hacked and disfigured until all appearance of their original forms was lost. Fourteen very valuable pictures, presented to the church by Sir John Anderton upon the occasion of his marriage—the subjects of which were the stages of our Lord's Passion—formed further objects of attack. Vying with each other in the zeal with which they executed the commands of their leaders, the sheriff's men and Master Windwood's servants fell upon these with swords and knives, and after ripping up the canvases into ribbons, hewed all the gilt from the massive frames. Conscious of the futility of opposition, neither the families of the glen, who stood grouped in front of the sanctuary, nor the unarmed little crowd of men, women, and children, who occupied the body of the church, had, so far, moved from their places. But when, advancing towards the altar, one of the soldiers with a blow from an axe broke open the tabernacle in which was reserved the Sacred Host, the whole congregation, uttering a cry of horror and execration, were about to rush forward *en masse*, in order, if possible, to prevent the sacrilege. A sign from Father Maitland, however, restrained the intention ere it could be put into execution, and an urgent entreaty for quietness and resigna-

tion from lips which had ever commanded reverence was instinctively obeyed.

‘My poor children,’ cried the venerable priest, addressing his people when a partial silence had been obtained, ‘my heart bleeds for the sufferings you are enduring. But be not alarmed, I beseech you; for these wicked men have no power to injure the person of our Blessed Lord in His Holy Sacrament. Moreover, He who so graciously presents Himself beneath these humble forms for the comfort and support of the faithful can, if so be He choose, withdraw Himself from them. Do not, therefore, dear friends, let this scene of turpitude distress you over-much. Put your trust in God, and—’

An angry command for silence was enforced by a rough shake from the men who guarded him; but the good priest’s words had had their effect, and the foolish attempt at resistance had been abandoned. The outraged people had fallen upon their knees, and only the groans and low-breathed curses of the men and the sobs of the women testified to the impotent rage and pain which were seething within their breasts. The work of demolition complete, another brief consultation was held between Master Windwood and the sheriff, at the close of which the latter, resting his back against the desecrated altar, announced that it had been decided to lock up all the men in the church, whilst search was made for the runaway priest, and also whilst all objects of superstition were removed from their dwellings.

‘And, peradventure, I may now be permitted, for the unburdening of my conscience, to address a few words of exhortation to these misguided victims of the Man of Sin?’ inquired the Rev. Silas Featherstone eagerly. ‘It may be that the Lord will deliver their souls as a prey to my hands.’

‘No, no, not to-day, Sir* Silas,’ returned the justice

* The title ‘Sir’ was given to parish-ministers of the Protestant

impatiently. 'Some other time, perchance, you may have an opportunity o' holding forth i' this church; and I warrant our good bishop will not be long i' providing the valley with a regular minister of its own. And troth, if the Lord doesn't deliver souls to *somebody's* hands, I'll deliver bodies to prison. But at present we have other fish to fry. We'll have a reformation, however, in this benighted spot ere many months are over our heads, or I'm greatly mistaken.' And pleased with his humorous speech, the amiable justice laughed, as he looked round to note its effect.

Once more, as the echo of his voice died away, a cry of execration and dismay ran through the building, and once more Father Maitland's uplifted hand enforced silence. Then, in a few burning words, the white-haired priest besought his listeners to hold fast by their holy faith: to have no fear of them that could 'kill the body, but afterwards had no more that they could do,' but rather to 'fear Him who had power to cast both body and soul into hell,' adding that he would willingly give his own life—ay, and twenty lives if he had them—rather than that one of his beloved flock should fall into heresy.

This time, however, Father Maitland's remarks found a speedy and unceremonious interruption; for a peremptory order to hold his peace having met with no attention, one of the sheriff's officers who stood near, at a command from Master Windwood, struck the aged man violently across the mouth.

Roused at witnessing this indignity to a pitch of fury perfectly uncontrollable, Henry Anderton, hindered in his marriage, outraged in his religious feelings, and insulted in the person of his pastor, bounded forward like an enraged madman, and with one stroke felled the offender

persuasion in Elizabeth's days, as it had formerly been to parish-priests.

to the ground. Then rushing at Anthony Windwood, he grappled with that gentleman, and endeavoured to wrest from him the weapon which hung at his side. His action was a signal for general commotion. Regardless now of every dictate of prudence, each man sprang to the assault. But ere many steps could be taken, a row of armed officials had spread themselves across the chancel, barring the way to where the combatants struggled, and unsheathed swords and muzzles of guns were pointed at the unarmed assailants.

‘Back, every one of you,’ shouted the sheriff angrily; ‘back, every one of you, or you shall be shot like dogs! Let that young man be made an example of,’ he pursued, addressing three powerful-looking fellows who had flown to the justice’s assistance. ‘Strike him with the butt-ends of your guns, men; ’twill serve as a warning to others.’

The order was obeyed, and, whilst hesitating to rush upon certain death the rest drew back, heavy blows descended upon Henry’s head, and one arm dropped broken by his side. Still manfully wrestling with his foes, the thwarted bridegroom seized Anthony Windwood by the throat, when suddenly a loud report rang through the building. Either by accident or design, a gun, which the justice had taken from one of his companions, had gone off; and when the smoke cleared away, Henry Anderton, pale and deathlike, was seen stretched upon the pavement in the sanctuary, whilst a red stream trickled down its marble steps.

With a piercing shriek Helen flew towards her lover, but before she reached him was caught fainting in her father’s arms. Another woman, however, to whom that wounded youth was dear as her own life, neither fainted nor shrieked. Advancing towards the group which had gathered about him, Lady Anderton gained instant admission to her son’s side; for at sight of her face those armed

men had fallen away on either side, terrified momentarily by what they saw there.

'What ho, there! Fellows, don't stand gaping round the young man like idiots,' exclaimed the sheriff, annoyed and somewhat ashamed of this *contretemps*. 'Let him be carried to his home anon, and let his friends accompany him. Take that door off its hinges,' he continued, indicating one that led to the sacristy, 'and use despatch about it, that we may shut up this yelping crew.'

The roughly-spoken command was attended to, and his wounds partially staunches by his mother's hand. Henry Anderton was laid upon the cushions and drapery which had been hastily spread upon the stretcher. A little later and a mournful procession was winding its way through the glen, the still-unmarried bride following in its rear, leaning upon the arm of Sir John Anderton, whose cheeks were nearly as pale and whose limbs trembled almost as violently as her own; whilst his lady, a strange glitter in her beautiful eyes, walked firm and erect by the side of her son's bearers.

CHAPTER VIII.

MASTER ASHWORTH HIDES HIMSELF.

AN urgent call to visit a sick person at some distance had prevented Master Ashworth from being present at the commencement of the wedding service, or officiating, as had been intended, as assistant priest; but, having returned, as he thought, in time to witness the conclusion of the ceremony, he ran up the narrow umbrageous path which led to St. Michael's Church. The speed, however, with which he approached the sacred building was greatly excelled by that with which he left it. For an instant he stood bewildered in the doorway, unnoticed by the excited crowd within. Then, with blanched face and feet winged with terror, he turned and fled. The scene which had disclosed itself in that glance, admitted for him but of one explanation: that calamity, which, on account of its having been so long delayed, he had almost ceased to dread, had, he saw, fallen at last. Those armed men were priest-hunting minions of the law: they had come to arrest Father Maitland and himself; and having secured the former, they would, doubtless, immediately institute a search for his own person. Scarcely knowing in his alarm whither his flight tended, but vaguely conscious that he must seek some place of concealment, the young priest presently found himself in the glen. Hastening towards Hall-i'-the-Wood, as the nearest place of shelter, he entered that house by a back door, and crept up-stairs without encountering any one upon the way; almost all

the servants, as well as the family, having gone to see their young mistress's bridal. Passing rapidly through room after room, Master Ashworth looked about him in feverish anxiety for some hole or corner in which to hide; but none which he could consider safe presented itself; and regretting now that he had come to the house, yet not daring to leave it again, he bolted the door of the apartment he had last entered, and ensconcing himself by the window, awaited the issue of events.

This was not long in declaring itself. In little more than ten minutes, the stretcher, upon which lay the apparently lifeless body of Henry Anderton, was carried past on its way to Erleston Grange; and, directly afterwards, the company of pursuivants entered the avenue leading to the hall. In front of them walked Squire Rutherford, the only man, with the exception of Sir John Anderton and the young apothecary, Miles Hardinge, who had been permitted to leave the church; and on either side of him appeared the under-sheriff and justice. Sir Silas Featherstone, however, was not now of the party; for, having some further preparations to make for an eloquent fulmination against the Papacy, which he intended this evening to deliver in his own church, he had deserted his quondam companions at the entrance to the glen, and had set off on his return to Orrleigh. Closely following upon the file of armed men came a troop of women, weeping and wringing their hands; whilst in the centre of the compact body, Master Ashworth recognised his aged and respected brother priest.

Shaking with fear, and blaming himself for having foolishly run into a trap, the young priest now withdrew from the window, which was a dormer one, and once again, with despairing eagerness, scanned the room wherein he had taken refuge. It was a rather large, curiously-shaped apartment, full of angles, and situated

immediately beneath the roof. The chimney proved upon examination to be too narrow to admit of his climbing into it; and what furniture there was, was of a character too simple to afford him the chance of cover. His only hope, if hope it might be called, lay in a small closet or press, which had been fitted into one of the angles; and opening this, Master Ashworth was about to step inside, when a bright thought suddenly struck him. The quarter of the hall in which he now stood was devoted to the use of Squire Rutherford's men-servants, and within the press, which he had just unclosed, hung certain garments belonging to a groom, whose chamber this was. Hastily stripping off his own clerical habiliments, Master Ashworth, in pursuance of the idea which had suggested itself, proceeded to array himself in a soiled doublet and smock which he had taken from a peg; then thrusting his coat and cassock into the bed, he began, in a somewhat more composed frame of mind, to pace the room and try to prepare himself for the part he intended to enact; but, unfortunately, a nervous dread deprived him of all power of reflection, and he soon found his entire mental energies concentrated in the act of listening. At first, faint from the distance, came the sound of tramping feet and rude laughter, as the pursuivants spread themselves over the ground floor: then louder grew the unrestrained mirth, and more resonant the heavy tread, for they had reached the second story. Presently, with a quaking heart, Master Ashworth perceived that they were mounting the flight of stairs which led to the attic region. Now they were in the adjoining rooms on either side of him. Amidst the noise of shifting furniture and other clamour, he could occasionally distinguish the words of an oath, which must have broken from Anthony Windwood or one of his personal attendants, for the Puritan under-sheriff neither used such himself, nor permitted his followers to use them. And

now, at length, the handle of the door belonging to the room he occupied was turned. A triumphant shout greeted the discovery that it was locked; and losing all presence of mind in an access of terror, the disguised priest crept into the closet, and drew to the door, just as that of the chamber was roughly burst open. As a matter of course a few seconds led to his detection.

‘Halloa! By Jupiter, unearthed at last!’ exclaimed the justice, in delighted tones, peering into the closet which he had been the first to perceive. ‘Prithee come forth, good Master Fox, and let’s see the length o’ your brush. But what! how now! Why, worshipful sheriff, ’tis not the Jesuit, I fear,’ he added, in much disappointment, as Rupert Ashworth stepped out in his soiled groom’s dress.

‘No, truly,’ rejoined the gentleman addressed; ‘the other is an older man, broader i’ the shoulders and graver i’ the face. But this, belike, Master Windwood, may be the younger priest of whom the worthy clergyman hath told us. ’Tis a suspicious circumstance that he should have locked the door and hidden himself i’ the press.’

‘Nay, nay, good sir,’ remarked the amiable justice, his face brightening with an inward conviction of the truth, but an impulse of his feline nature prompting him to play a little with his victim before proceeding to his destruction,—‘nay, nay, this fellow is a *servant*, sweet sir, as you may see by his clothing; and a very proper man he is too, though somewhat timorous withal. You are a servant, are you not, my man?’

‘Ay, i’ truth, noble master, I am; I’m a servant o’ that gentleman,’ replied Master Ashworth, trying to speak broadly, and pointing to Squire Rutherford, who had been compelled to accompany the pursuivants over his house.

‘Ha, to be sure, to be sure, there can be no question on’t,’ returned Master Windwood, with sarcastic emphasis,

fixing upon him a keen disconcerting gaze. ' 'Twould be the height o' ill manners to doubt your word; but prithee tell us, good fellow, as a matter o' curiosity, what was't made you hide i' the press?'

' 'Twas because the knave is not of a sound mind,' broke in Squire Rutherford, quick-wittedly coming to the rescue, 'and was doubtless terrified by the din ye made. He lost a young wife some six months ago, and his wits have been woolgathering ever since; and a confounded idle dog he is beside, ever shirking his work, and slinking up here to sleep away his time. Go, get you gone to the stables, sirrah,' he continued, in affected anger; 'marry, you're scarce worth your salt, you lazy fellow! Trust me, if you don't mend your ways, you'll get a discharge from my service.'

'Nay, friend, beseech you, leave us not i' such hot haste,' interposed the sheriff, stepping in front of Master Ashworth, as he was about to slip from the room, in obedience to this welcome command. 'I must question you a little further, an you please; for, to speak truth, I am full of distrust concerning you. Observe, Master Windwood, the neat black gaiters and hose of this seeming servant,' he pursued, lifting the smock, in order the better to exhibit these articles; 'they accord ill, methinks, with the rest o' his attire; and yes, verily, the mark of the Beast is upon him, the young man hath a shaven crown. My word for't, 'tis the priest.'

'Christ's mercy!' cried Master Windwood, professing great astonishment, 'say you so? But no, the respectable servant of our friend, this poor bereaved widower, cannot be a *priest*. The idea is preposterous. You are *not* a priest, are you, my man?'

'Faith, sir, you do me over-much honour i' the suspicion,' faltered Master Ashworth between his white lips; 'as I said before, I be naught but a poor servant.'

'Ay, certes, to believe otherwise would be to do a cruel wrong,' sneered his interlocutor; 'tis no joy these days to be accused of being a Mass-monger. ever, just to satisfy our over-zealous brother there will, perhaps, have the goodness to repeat these, and drawing forth his pocket-book, the justice took Master Ashworth a paper, upon which was printed large letters the oath of supremacy and allegiance, by which the temporal authority of the Pope is jured, as well as all spiritual exercise of it against Queen's interest.

Master Ashworth took the paper, read it through; and, returning it, said, with some firmness, 'a Catholic, I cannot take that oath.'

'But you can read, sirrah, it appears,' dryly replied the justice, 'which is a somewhat unusual accomplishment for one of your degree. Moreover, you have the power of changing your accent, and—Heyday, we here?' he ejaculated, interrupting him of the sheriff's men (who, with a license of law, had been overturning everything in the roomward the priest's clothes, which had been taken to the bed. 'Is this a portion of your wardrobe, Master Jackanapes?' he inquired, holding up the garment full length; 'truly, it seems about your size; see if it will fit;' and bidding a couple of the stableman's smock and doublet, he ordered Master Ashworth to invest himself in his own garments.

'Ha, an excellent fit, by my troth; cut, too,' resumed the facetious justice, as he turned the priest from head to foot, when the order came. 'By Jove, I begin to think there's something about you, after all, gentle widower; the fact of your having been shut up in the bed, the clothes being found in the bed,

sition. The lamb, forsooth, hath transformed itself into a lion ; but come, officers, take him in charge forthwith, a court o' justice, peradventure, will succeed in wringing from him an avowal of his priestly functions ; at any rate we have ample evidence to warrant an arrest upon suspicion.'

During the time occupied in the examination of the house, and in the foregoing conversation, Father Maitland had been detained by a small guard below stairs ; and the two priests, their hands bound together by a leathern strap, were now led forth from the hall. The group of women, who had followed the pursuivants from the church, still lingered in the grounds ; and, upon perceiving that *both* their pastors were now in the custody of these representatives of the unjust and bloody laws then in force against Catholics in Great Britain, they rent the air with a renewed cry of distress. Then, bemoaning the danger of the priests, and pitifully bewailing their own misery in being deprived of Mass and the Sacraments, they ran forward, and gathering around the gate of the avenue, wildly endeavoured to obstruct the passage of the men.

Tenderly sympathising in their grief, Father Maitland exhorted the poor women to put their trust in God, and to seek from Him power to exercise patience and resignation ; but a brusque command from Anthony Windwood to 'Stop that prating !' cut short his address. A volley of wrathful and highly uncomplimentary remarks greeted this interference. But the tongue was a weapon against which Master Windwood was almost entirely invulnerable ; and looking round with a smile more aggravating than words, he motioned the pursuivants to clear the way. Then bidding the women cease to follow, under threat of a few pricks of the sword should they disobey, he turned with his party in the direction of Erleston Orange, cheerfully observing to his fellow-officer, 'By the

gods, Master Sheriff, we've been fortunate to-day ; we've bagged two-thirds of our game, you see, and without much trouble ; all we want now is the Jesuit, and our tale of these villains will be complete. But, by Jove, we must bestir ourselves, or 'twill be getting dark before we can get back to Ridgwood Manor, and, worse than that, our supper will be spoiled ;' and stimulated by the latter consideration, the worthy justice pressed forward at the top of his speed, and followed by his companions, soon reached Erleston Grange. But, although from cellar to attic, every nook and corner of that mansion was subjected to a careful scrutiny, although the walls were measured and sounded in the hope of detecting secret chambers, although the chapel itself was entered and examined, Father Christopher remained undiscovered. A little annoyed at the amount of time which had been thus fruitlessly expended, the company now hastened to quit the glen, and proceeded to search in the outlying farms and cottages. But an inspection of the entire district could not be completed that evening ; and as darkness began to settle over the country, the sheriff, not unwillingly complying with Master Windwood's suggestion, released the prisoners in the church, and returned to Ridgwood. Waradale, however, had not seen the last of its unwelcome visitors. Two more days did the zealous pursuivants spend in hunting the valley for their prey ; and it was not until a full week had elapsed that, relinquishing all hope of recovering trace of the 'escaped Jesuit,' they finally left the neighbourhood of Orrleigh, carrying away with them the two priests.

CHAPTER IX.

HENRY ANDERTON'S DEATH.

ON a balmy May evening, just a fortnight from the day upon which the marriage ceremony had been so brutally interrupted, Henry Anderton, enveloped in blankets and propped up by pillows, reclined upon a low bench or settee in front of an open window. By his side sat Helen Rutherford, her hand clasping the emaciated fingers which lay outside the coverlet, and her wistful gaze fixed upon his countenance. Sadly changed were both since the time when they had stood before the altar, a happy expectant bride and bridegroom ! Upon Helen's sweet face the mental suffering which she had endured in the interim had set an unmistakable seal. The rich colouring and perfect outline of her cheeks were gone, her rosy mouth had lost its happy piquant expression, and her eyes looked heavy and faded with weeping. Much more striking, however, was the alteration which that short fortnight had wrought in the beloved being over whose shattered form she was bending. Thin before, Henry had become but a faint shadow of his former self. Great hollows were in his cheeks, his temples were sunken, and from the dark circles which surrounded them, his eyes looked out strangely large and bright. They were turned at this moment towards the window ; and struck by their singular air of deep thought, almost of exaltation, Helen allowed hers to follow in the same direction. The room fronted the west, and the sun was just going

down between bars of crimson and gold, leaving a long red trail of light behind him, along the road by which he was travelling to his rest. Above the gorgeous colouring billowed fleecy-white clouds, rising pile over pile into the deep blue expanse beyond, and looking like the smoke of incense ascending from that glowing censer to the worshipping earth's Creator. Over the hills, where all day spring had been holding high festival amidst the newly-garlanded and blossom-strewn woods, hung a faint roseate mist. The soft air was redolent with pleasant odours, and the birds were singing their evening voluntaries to the departing lord of day. Light and beauty filled the scene, yet over all there appeared to rest a sobering sense of the on-coming twilight. Helen's thoughts, as she gazed sadly at the prospect before her, had wandered back to that evening preceding what should have been her wedding day, when Henry and she had stood together in the mullioned window at Hall-i'-th'-Wood, watching a somewhat different sunset. How long, long ago that seemed! And what eternities of miserable anxiety, of deferred hope, and of slow-growing conviction had she passed through since then! How she shuddered when she thought of the scene of sacrilege and brutality in the church, and recalled that awful moment when she had heard the shot ring through the building, had seen her lover fall, and had felt her own brain reel as she sank into a merciful abyss of darkness! Then, mentally pursuing the history of these two weary weeks, she recollected how, upon the recovery of consciousness, there had come an absorbing terror lest Henry should pass away in that death-like swoon in which he was conveyed home, followed by an intense relief when he awoke from it, and again by an agony in witnessing the protracted and painful surgical operations which Miles Hardinge, with Lady Anderton's assistance, had not unskilfully effected. Then had suc-

ceeded terrible days and nights, when, in a fever accompanied by the wildest delirium, Henry had required the alert attentions of several persons in order to prevent his springing from bed or tearing the bandages and splinters from his broken arm, or from the shoulder whence the deeply lodged ball had been with difficulty extracted. During those days the poor sufferer had been a prey to dreadful fancies—at one time mistaking his careful guardians for a pack of wolves, by which he would imagine himself attacked, and at another for human but equally savage foes—and under these delusions struggling to free himself from their grasp, and shrieking and raving in a manner which shook her nerves and tore with anguish her sympathetic breast. Less fearful, but not less heart-rending, had been the next stage in this sad tragedy of Helen's life, when, though the fever still burnt on with unabated virulence, she had seen her lover becoming daily and hourly more weak and feeble. No longer had it been necessary to hold him in bed, for his strength was well-nigh spent; and, moreover, with the loss of vitality, his disordered imagination had begun to run in a less exciting channel. Furious expressions had given place to tender words of love; smiles transformed the face which had been distorted by rage and terror; and in lieu of wrestling with hungry wolves or with men worse than wild beasts, he was, as she could easily gather, wandering with herself in shadowy woods, or whispering his affection in some quiet corner of her father's dwelling. Seated at the foot of his bed, she had listened to these wanderings, in which *her* name had ever been upon the beloved lips. But, although her heart ached to do so, she had not been permitted to approach nearer, to touch Henry's burning forehead with her hand, or to tend him in any way whatsoever; for Lady Anderton, who, from the first, had scarcely left her son's side for an instant, had now taken entire possession

of him. No hand but her own was allowed to smooth out his pillow, to feed him, or to administer the medicines which Miles prepared, under her direction, from the herbs in her pharmacopœia. Still, grievous though it was thus to be deprived of the place which she considered hers by right, something in the poor mother's aspect, in the hard-set white face which she saw bending night and day over the unconscious youth, had forbidden Helen to dispute for it. So she had sat afar off, watching and weeping and praying—noting the gradual ebbing away of that precious life—yet hoping against hope, for was not the Holy Sacrifice daily offered for his recovery, and were not petitions for the same favour constantly ascending from his bedside? It was strange—but she had experienced little surprise on learning of Father Christopher's presence within the mansion. His history, and the story of his arrival, which, after the departure of the pursuivants, had been repeated to all its inmates, had fallen in her case upon unattentive ears. Not once had she thought of the significance of the circumstance in relation to the removal of the parish priests and the threatened persecution of the valley. All her interests—her every fear, hope, thought—centred for the moment round the one absorbing question, would her affianced husband be restored to her? and it was only in so far as it might affect this question that she had been able to notice, or rejoice in, the good father's proximity. But neither medicine nor nursing, neither sacrifice nor prayer, seemed destined to prove of any avail. Slowly, but surely, Henry appeared to be nearing the borders of the grave, and at length there had come that never-to-be-forgotten evening, when, all hope relinquished, his relatives had assembled round his couch to recite the prayers for the dying, and to witness that solemn sight—the departure of a soul to its Maker. That same evening, even whilst in the act of despairingly entreating that her

lover might be restored to reason—were it but a few moments, in order that he might die fortified by the rites of the Church—Helen's head had drooped upon his bed, and she had fallen asleep—sleeping for very grief as did the disciples of our Lord, and, as not unfrequently, do criminals upon the eve of their execution. All through the night she had slept, awaking in the gray dawn of early morning to find that a wonderful change had taken place in the patient—that all traces of fever had vanished, and that consciousness once more lighted up the dear but wasted face. But magical as this alteration appeared, it scarcely surprised Helen more than did the fact that Lady Anderton had disappeared from the chamber, and that her so tenaciously retained post by Henry's pillow was occupied by her daughter Kate. It was now, however, at once yielded to herself; and after exchanging a word or two with her lover, and waiting until she had recovered a little from her happy revulsion of feeling, she questioned Kate, and learned from her, in a whisper, that upon perceiving the change referred to, which had exhibited itself after a peaceful slumber, the singular expression which Lady Anderton's face had worn ever since the casualty, and which had been the occasion of vague uneasiness to all her family, had suddenly melted away—that the poor lady had thrown herself upon her husband's neck, had murmured in a faint voice, 'He will live! he will live! O, thank God, he will live!' and had then sunk upon the floor in a swoon.

Four days had elapsed since this event; yet Lady Anderton had not revisited her son's chamber. She was lying now in one adjoining it, suffering from brain-fever, accompanied by alarming symptoms, and the anxieties of the household were accordingly divided. Death, indeed, appeared to be closely hovering over both apartments; for the hope which had been raised in Henry's case on the

disappearance of all active disease had proved but a deceitful *ignis fatuus*, and to himself, as well as to all around him it was evident that the young man was rapidly sinking from exhaustion.

On the morning of the day referred to at the beginning of the chapter, the end had appeared very near, and in preparation for it Henry had received the last Sacraments, and had bidden farewell to one or two members of his family. But towards afternoon an apparent revival had taken place, and this evening the baleful shadow of the invisible enemy seemed to rest more darkly over the mother than the son. Thus it had come to pass that, almost for the first time since the day which should have made him her husband, Helen was left alone with her lover. Misled by the delusive flickering up of his life and strength, she had imagined that the separation, which she believed, would shroud her earthly days in unbroken gloom, had been indefinitely postponed, and, in truth, she had even, with the ready sanguineness of youth, allowed herself feebly to hope that the dreaded blow might be altogether averted. Overpowering, therefore, was the shock with which, upon bringing her gaze back from the glowing sunset to the narrow couch on which Henry had, at his own request, been laid some hours before, she perceived that, in the few moments during which her eyes had been turned from it, an ominous change had come over his face. A sudden blenching of his already pale cheeks had left them of an unearthly whiteness; his shrunken features looked pinched and drawn, whilst large drops of death-sweat were fast gathering upon his brow. No terror, however, showed itself in the eyes of the consciously dying man, as they silently met her own. On the contrary, there was in them such an unmistakable look of awe and rapture, that in a moment the swollen waters of her soul, which had risen and were beating wildly to

find an outlet of relief, sank stilled into the peace of solemnity. For some seconds longer the two remained with clasped hands, eagerly scanning each other's countenances. Then the sick man spoke :

'Helen, my darling,' he said, 'we lie i' the hollow of His hand who painted yon golden sky—who framed the world and all that is in it. We are His creatures, and He does with us as He wills. But His will is the will o' a *Father*. I had thought to have spent a long and happy life with thee, my Helen, but He hath seen, fit t'should not be so—blessed be His holy name! Helen, say with me, "'Tis the Lord; let Him do as seemeth Him good.'"

'No, no, Henry, I cannot say it; I cannot—I cannot!' cried Helen—the spell which had driven back the flood of agony broken by his voice—'O Henry, my love, my love! do not die—do not—do not leave me!' And shaken by tearless sobs, the stricken girl laid her head upon his shoulder.

A feeble arm was raised to caress her, and in tender tones the dying man strove to soothe, and prayed God to comfort her: 'And He *will* comfort thee, my darling,' he added, 'and, an thou wilt but trust Him, thou shalt shortly see that whatsoever He doeth is well done.'

'Nay, Henry, 'tis not *His* doing, this,' returned Helen, rage and anguish struggling for the mastery in her breast. "'Tis those wicked fiendish men that have slain thee. May God reward them according to their deeds! Thou hast been murdered, my Henry—thou—'

'Stay, Helen; indulge not those angry feelings, I entreat thee,' remonstrated Henry. 'Remember, sweet, *how* He forgave His enemies as He hung upon the cross. Helen, I forgive mine freely, and I pray God to bless and change their hearts. And, after all, dearest, 'twas no injury, but rather a *service*, those men did thee and me—

for is 't not a great honour, Helen, to suffer and die for refusing to disobey the law o' God, or to acknowledge other Church than His own ?

Helen's rebellious heart was touched by her dying lover's resignation, but not yet subdued, and prompted by feelings, of the selfishness of which she repented upon the following instant, she murmured reproachfully : ' Ah, Henry, thou dost not love me ! an thou *didst*, thou wouldst not be so willing to die. Thou art leaving me without a pang ! 'Tis naught to thee, the parting which is riving my heart !'

A spasm of pain crossed Henry's pallid face, bringing to it but a momentary flush, which faded ere he replied : ' Helen, thou knowest that I love thee ; that I have loved thee all my life. But, darling, the shades of death are gathering around me, and—do not let it grieve thee—but ever since I received Him this morning, my Saviour hath been whispering in my heart, "*Thou and I ! Thou and I !*" And the whisper gets louder and louder, Helen. I seem now to be well-nigh alone with Him in the universe—and, truly, all lesser loves grow pale at sight of Him—the unutterable Essence of Love ? O Helen, I am not afraid to die, for He is upholding me with His hand. He hath taken away my sins, and there is no sting i' death. And verily, Helen,' he went on, fixing his rapturous gaze on the pale saffron sea which now spread over the horizon whence the red glory had departed—' verily it seemeth to me that I am going to be *born*, not to die—to be born into the *unknown*—but not a DARK *unknown*, for 'tis filled with God. By the gate of death I shall enter eternity, and reach His presence. O, what will it be to see Him face to face—to behold and taste the joys of heaven ! Helen, prithee repeat me that beautiful hymn thou didst learn from the book William brought home from Germany ; the one beginning, " In the fount of life

perennial." I have somewhat to say to thee anon, but my breath grows short, and 'twill rest me to hear it.'

Subduing herself with an effort, Helen complied ; and though her voice faltered at first, it became calmer and steadier as she proceeded, and ere the verses were ended, her passion of grief had given place to a resignation almost as entire and holy as was that of Henry.

'In the fount of life perennial the parchèd heart its thirst would
slake,

And the soul, in flesh imprisoned, longs her prison-walls to break ;
Exile, seeking, sighing, yearning in her Fatherland to wake.

Who can utter what the pleasures and the peace unbroken are,
Where arise the pearly mansions, shedding silvery light afar ;
Festive seats and golden roofs, which glitter like the evening star ?

Wholly of fair stones most precious are those radiant structures
made ;

With pure gold, like glass transparent, are those shining streets
inlaid ;

Nothing that defiles can enter, nothing that can soil or fade.

Stormy winter, burning summer, rage within those regions never ;
But perpetual bloom of roses and unfading spring for ever :
Lilies gleam, the crocus glows, and dropping balms their scents
deliver.

Honey pure and greenest pastures, this the land of promise is ;
Liquid odours soft distilling, perfumes breathing on the breeze ;
Fruits immortal cluster always on the leafy fadeless trees.

There no moon shines chill and changing, there no stars with
twinkling ray ;

For the Lamb of that blest city is at once the sun and day :
Night and time are known no longer, day shall never fade away.

There the saints, like suns, are radiant—like the sun at dawn they
glow ;

Crownèd victors after conflict, all their joys together flow ;
And, secure, they count the battles where they fought the prostrate
foe.

Ev'ry stain of flesh is cleansed, every strife is left behind ;
 Spiritual are their bodies, perfect unity of mind ;
 Dwelling in deep peace for ever, no offence or grief they find.

Putting off their mortal vesture, in their source their souls they
 steep ;
 Truth by actual vision learning, on its form their gaze they keep ;
 Drinking from the Living Fountain draughts of living waters deep.

Ever filled and ever seeking, what they have they still desire ;
 Hunger there shall fret them never, nor satiety shall tire ;
 Still enjoying whilst aspiring, in their joy they still aspire.

There the new song, new for ever, those melodious voices sing,
 Ceaseless strains of fullest music through those blessed regions
 ring ;
 Crowned victors ever bringing praises worthy of the King.

Blessed who the King of Heaven in His beauty thus behold,
 And, beneath His throne rejoicing, see the universe unfold—
 Sun and moon, and stars and planets, radiant in His light unrolled.

Christ, the palm of faithful victors, of that city make me free ;
 When my warfare shall be ended, to its mansions lead Thou me !
 Grant me, with its happy inmates, sharer of Thy gifts to be !

Let Thy soldier, still contending, still be with Thy strength sup-
 plied ;
 Thou wilt not deny the quiet when the arms are laid aside ;
 Make me meet with Thee for ever in that country to abide.'

' " Make me meet with Thee for ever in that country
 to abide ! "' slowly repeated Henry, his eyes still bent
 upon the boundary line of sky, where now one or two pale
 stars might be faintly discerned, like lambent specks in
 the bed of 'daffodil' light. 'O, wash me, sweet Jesus,
 in Thy most precious blood,' he pursued, his voice sinking
 to a whisper with the last words, and his lips continuing
 to move in prayer so long, that it became evident to
 Helen that he had quite lost consciousness of her pre-
 sence.

An involuntary movement upon her part startled him

at length from his abstraction, and, as her dying lover once more turned to look at her, Helen said softly, whilst the tear-drops glistened in her eyes, 'Forgive what I said to thee erewhiles, my Henry, for, truly, I know that thou hast loved me well. 'Twas the pain of finding that we must part so soon which made me unjust. But, dearest, I am willing now that thou shouldst go. Thou wilt be taken from the evil days which, I fear me, are i' store for us in the valley; and though my life will be joyless and desolate without thee, 'twill, I trust, be short. And, Henry, we shall meet again, I hope, i' that blest city! 'Twill make the thought o' it the sweeter to know that *thou* art there, and mayhap, love, one clasp o' the hand i' heaven will be better than marriage here. Henry, I offer my empty life to Him who died for us all. His will be done!'

'Thank God for that good prayer, Helen!' responded Henry. 'I shall die the happier for't. But, dear one,' he subjoined, somewhat hesitatingly, 'I would not have thy life on earth empty, as thou sayest, and 'twas of this I desired to speak to thee. Helen, this morning I learnt poor William's secret. He is a good and noble fellow, and—Helen, there are no jealousies i' heaven—and, an thou canst love him, dearest, I—I—'

'O Henry, beseech thee, talk not o' such a thing!' interposed Helen. 'My heart will be buried in thy grave; I can never love another man. But, O my love, thy face changes again; thou—'

'Yes, yes, I have done with earthly things! The summons has come!' gasped Henry, the cold perspiration breaking forth a-fresh, and the film of death beginning to gather over his eyes. 'Kiss me once more, my Helen—then—quickly call Father Christopher and my mother—she must be more ill than they have said, or she will come to me now—and all the house, Helen! I would fain

say farewell, and commend my soul to their prayers—
Good-bye, love—God bless thee—Ah, haste !'

One lingering pressure of the lips Helen left on that loved face, then sped from the chamber. But when, a few moments afterwards, she reëntered, along with those she had gone to summons, there was no occasion for the soft tread and hushed murmur of distress, for only an empty shell lay upon the couch by the window. The soul which had inhabited it had gone to behold the King in His beauty.

CHAPTER X.

THE REV. PAUL CUNNINGHAM.

THE prediction which Master Windwood had made respecting the church of St. Michael was honoured by speedy fulfilment. In less than three weeks after the visit of the pursuivants it was furnished with a minister of the 'Reformed Faith.' This minister was the Rev. Paul Cunningham—a young man of good family; a graduate of the Manchester College; and a great favourite with Bishop Chadderton. During the past year, Master Cunningham, in conjunction with other 'godly preachers' who had received their education in the above-mentioned college, had been engaged in supplying, upon the Lord's day, the vacant pulpits of Stretford, Choriton, Didsbury, Gorton, &c.,—villages in the vicinity of Manchester—in which were small chapels too poorly endowed for the support of settled curates. In this labour he had shown both enthusiasm and talent: his sermons being especially distinguished for the severity of their denunciations of Catholicism; and anxious to reward his various merits, the bishop had promised him the first comfortable living which should fall within his province to bestow.

Upon receiving notice concerning the Popish church of Warstable—the existence of which within his diocese he had long suspected—the bishop had visited that secluded spot in person; and finding that, by the ruse of its founder, the church had been somewhat richly invested with glebe-lands, he had, in fulfilment of his promise, at

once licensed his favourite to the cure. Accordingly, in company with a young lady, to whom he had for some time been engaged, and whom he now hastily married, Master Cunningham took possession of the priest's house adjoining the church, in which Father Maitland and Master Ashworth had lately resided. To fit it for the reception of his bride, however, the house had previously been almost entirely refurnished; and, with the approbation of the bishop, a work had already been commenced which would presently constitute it a much more agreeable dwelling-place. This was the cutting down of a portion of the dense wood, hitherto encouraged to encroach around it and the church, and whereby both had been rendered decidedly gloomy, but of which, as there was now no longer any occasion for the concealment of the latter, it was wisely proposed to get rid. To these alterations in the house and its surroundings had been added changes of equal importance within the church; or, rather, there had been made a thorough completion of those wrought by Justice Windwood and his companions. The building now presented an undoubtedly 'decent' aspect—all remains of the broken statues and pictures having been cleared out and consumed—altar-cloths and furniture, priest's vestments and Missal books, going to swell the bonfire. A magnificent bas-relief, which had formed the back of the altar, had been removed, together with the altar itself, leaving indications of its position upon the bare wall against which it had formerly stood, and the chancel was now occupied by a wooden table, spread with the 'fair white cloth' commanded by the new rubrical. In the vestry hung a couple of surplices, which, however, the young Puritan was in two minds about using, since—in accord with some of the most eminent churchmen of the day, such as Jewell, Grindal, Nowell, and Sandys, Archbishop of York and one of the Manchester commissioners,

he greatly disapproved of their use. Against some few Popish ceremonies and observances, moreover, which were retained in the law church, and which Elizabeth would not consent to discard—as, for instance, the posture of kneeling at Communion, the signing of the cross in Baptism, the employment in divine service of organs, or other musical instruments—Master Cunningham fully intended to wage war. There was, howbeit, one custom of Catholic origin, which, although generally pronounced by the Puritan malcontents to be foolish and superfluous, rather commended itself to Master Cunningham's private judgment, and with which, in consequence, he thought proper to conform. This custom was the ringing of bells at the hour appointed for public worship; and accordingly, upon the Sunday following his induction to this, his first cure, a small peal which hung in the gray tower of St. Michael's Church were made to send forth their concerted tones far over the valley. The ringers upon this occasion were the young clergyman himself, two men engaged for the purpose from Orrleigh, and a man-servant whom he had been recommended by Bishop Chadderton to take with him from Manchester, and who, it was intended, could act as churchwarden, beadle, sexton, or in any other capacity required of him, until these offices in connection with the church could be more suitably filled up by converts from the neighbourhood. Through motives of prudence the bells had been disused almost from the time of Elizabeth's accession, and as, after the lapse of so many years, they were now unexpectedly heard in Waradale, much excitement was naturally experienced by the inhabitants. Men started and frowned as the long unaccustomed tintinnabulations awoke the echoes of the valley; women crossed themselves and wept—recalling the happy days when, during the brief triumph of the Faith, under Queen Mary, those bells had last sounded out their summons to Mass; and children

ran eagerly to cottage-doors to listen to music, the like of which had never before greeted their young ears. Amongst those by whom the sound of the church-going bells was heard for the first time in her life on this bright May Sunday, in the year 1582, was little Agnes Rutherford. Oppressed by the gloom, which, since Henry's death, and her sister's consequent bereavement, had hung like a heavy pall over the sympathetic household of Hall-i'-th'-Wood, the child had willingly complied with an invitation from her half-brother to take with him a short stroll. Her spirits rising in the fresh air and sunshine, she was skipping along by Walter's side, while he—almost as glad to escape from the house of mourning as his little companion—was chatting with her gaily, when, just as they were passing along the road beneath the church, a harmonious clang suddenly resounded overhead, startling both. Quite frightened, at first, by the unlooked-for report, Agnes pressed forward, without speaking, drawing Walter by the hand; but when the distance of a few yards had been gained, and she had somewhat recovered from her surprise, she paused to hearken. Then, pleased with the novel melody made by the sweet-toned bells, she begged Walter to lift her into an old oak which grew by the road-side, the gnarled branches of which were bent and twisted in such a fashion as to form an excellent seat. Obeying the request, the young man remained, leaning against the tree, by her side, with the child's hand resting upon his shoulder; and, permitted by her absorbed silence to indulge his own thoughts, he presently fell into a reverie. From this he was aroused by a pressure of the small fingers which grasped his shoulder, and an excited exclamation of 'Look yonder, Walter!' and turning in the direction indicated he observed that a horseman, followed by a clumsily-built carriage, had just emerged from behind the little hamlet of Wolfesford, and that both

were advancing along the narrow lane in which he stood. At the epoch of which we write, carriages in our country were extremely rare, being, indeed—save in a few very exceptional cases—only possessed by the highest nobility of the land; and it was the sight of this vehicle—as new to her eyes as was the sound of the bells to her ears, which had called forth Agnes's ejaculation of astonishment. Sharing, in a measure, in that astonishment, Walter gazed attentively at the approaching carriage, which was painted of a brilliant yellow colour, and drawn by two fine black horses. But his study was quickly interrupted; for upon catching sight of him, the horseman who rode in front of it put spurs to the animal beneath him, and galloped forward. As he drew near, young Willoughby perceived—with what feelings may be imagined—that this horseman was no less a personage than Master Anthony Windwood, the new justice of the peace. He perceived, too, without much difficulty, as that gentleman reined up in front of him, that he was in a very bad humour—which bad humour had been brought about by a not very politely expressed refusal, on the part of the dwellers in Wolfesford, to obey a command, issued in passing the hamlet, that they should at once betake themselves to church. This command, accompanied by a threat of the consequences of disobedience, the amiable justice now proceeded to repeat to Walter, and with a like result; for though his cheek paled a little, as much with hatred as fear of his interlocutor, the young man unhesitatingly declined to become a hearer of the Rev. Paul Cunningham.

‘Very well, sirrah, let that be as you list this morn,’ rejoined the irritated functionary; ‘but I trow we shall shortly bring you to acknowledge that the inside o’ a church is somewhat pleasanter than the inside o’ a prison.’

‘Faith, ’tis very possible you may yourself see the in-

side o' a prison ere long, worthy sir,' retorted Walter, the bold speech costing him an effort in spite of the angry feelings which prompted it; 'for 'twas you caused the death o' my friend Henry Anderton, and I have little doubt but his father will endeavour to get you punished for the crime.'

'Perdy! so the young man's dead, is he?' muttered Master Windwood, an expression of concern, or annoyance, crossing his face, which, however, vanished instantly; and sneering at Walter's empty menace of evil results to himself, he went on to charge the young man with an insulting message to his friends, enforcing its delivery by the application of certain disagreeable epithets (a store of which he had ever at command) to his proposed messenger.

Walter, whose passion was seldom roused, excepting by matters which personally touched him, was preparing, with a flush face, to hurl back the uncomplimentary terms, and to decline with emphasis the honour of becoming the justice's errand-man, when—the plunging of the horses in the carriage, which was now drawn up close by where he was stationed, causing him to glance in that direction—the words were arrested upon his lips. From the open window of that carriage looked out a face which, for grace and beauty, would have rivalled that of the Venus de' Medici itself. Its contour, both in the profile and full face, was simply perfect. And the loveliness was not of a rustic type. On the contrary, it was of that description which one expects to find in a palace rather than in a cottage. The small straight nose was set above a mouth the exquisite curves of which would have enraptured a painter; the eyes, with their delicately-arched brows and upward-curling lashes, were of that shade of blue which is sometimes denominated violet; golden-brown hair waved over a low broad forehead, and the complexion, with its rare

softness of texture and hue, would in itself have justified its possessor in putting forth a claim to beauty. At nineteen, Caroline Windwood, the idol of her father's heart, and the only being in the world for whom he cared one jot or tittle, was well fitted to inspire a poet's theme; and of the meed of flattery and affection which must inevitably fall to her share, she had already quaffed a full measure. It was with no surprise, therefore, though certainly with a little pleasant tickling of her vanity, that she noticed the gaze of wondering admiration fixed upon her face by the handsome young man with whom her father had been conversing. For that Walter was handsome, and in the style that pleased her fancy, Mistress Windwood did not fail to observe; and to this fact, perhaps, was owing the readiness with which came the gratified smile that displayed a set of regular pearly teeth, and imprinted a love-dimple in the smooth rose-tinted cheek. Awakened by that smile from the trance of delighted amazement into which he had fallen, Walter blushed to the brow, and, to hide his confusion, turned to lift little Agnes from her seat. He could not, however, refrain from again directing his eyes towards the yellow coach, as, in obedience to the justice's command, it moved slowly forward, passing him within a few inches; and as he did so, he saw that besides Caroline, who was now leaning back against the blue-covered padding of its interior, it had another occupant; a pale delicate-looking woman, with features not unlike those of her young companion, and the remains of much past beauty, but with an expression in her face of settled discontent and deep depression. The coach—which had been purchased by Master Windwood to please his daughter, whose every wish he strove to satisfy—paused again at the bottom of the pathway leading up to St. Michael's; the justice having chosen, this morning, to attend that church in preference to the one at Orrleigh,

which was considerably nearer his house. The ladies having alighted, it was then driven onwards as far as the entrance to the glen, where space was afforded wherein it it could be turned; and following it, Walter and Agnes, neither of them now feeling any inclination to extend their walk, returned to Hall-i'-th'-Wood. On reaching home the little girl, greatly excited by her morning's adventure, hastened to relate to her parents all that had occurred, giving them a detailed description of the carriage, and repeating, as far as she was able, the remarks of the worthy justice of the peace. Walter also added his quota of information to that of the child, but, to his own surprise, he found that much of his bitterness against Master Windwood had vanished. A kind of glamour had been cast over him in the young man's eyes by his relationship with that fair girl, and strive as he would he could feel neither very angry nor very disgusted with this vulgar uncompromising enemy of his faith, now that he knew him to be the father of such a daughter. Of the beauty of that daughter, however, he spoke not a syllable to his family, though by what motive his reticence upon this point was actuated he would have had some difficulty in stating. To analyse the impression produced upon him by the vision of undreamed-of loveliness which had this morning met his view did not occur to Walter Willoughby; but that he had received a new revelation he felt, and that that revelation made him very restless was a fact. Unable to remain quietly in the house, he by and by wandered forth again; and about the time of the conclusion of the new service which had been held in St. Michael's Church, he found himself seated upon a bench in Abel Hardinge's cottage, conversing with a little company of men who were assembled there, but listening at the same time for the sound of wheels, which would betoken the approach of the yellow carriage he had passed

standing at the foot of the hill close at hand. If any part of his object in making this curiously-timed visit to the hamlet had been to catch another glimpse of the younger occupant of that carriage, Walter's pains met with their reward; for, standing half concealed beneath the doorway of the country inn, he not only saw Caroline Windwood again, but was also seen of her; and the slight blush which deepened the colour on her cheek, as she once more encountered his ardent gaze, did not render her queenly beauty the less captivating to the young man's vision. When the carriage had gone by, Walter still lingered at the door, his attention now drawn to the justice, who, sitting his horse within a stone's throw of the hamlet, was conversing with a gentleman, his words being accompanied by many gesticulations and flourishings of his riding-whip. This gentleman, who had been walking by Master Windwood's side, but who had now stopped to bid him adieu, was, as Walter (who, it happened, had not yet seen him) readily guessed, the Rev. Paul Cunningham. The brow of the clergyman, who was a pale, dark-eyed, not unpleasing-looking young man, some twenty-five years of age, was clouded by displeasure and annoyance, occasioned by the fact that, in addition to his bride, her two maids, and his own servant, his congregation this morning had consisted of Master Windwood, his wife and daughter, and the two bell-ringers from Orrleigh, and that on this handful of hearers he had been compelled to waste a well-prepared controversial sermon. That Sir Paul Cunningham received a full measure of sympathy in his vexation from the equally provoked magistrate will be easily believed; and when, with the exchange of a friendly farewell, he now parted from him, it was in a much happier frame of mind. And well it might be; for besides the sympathy, cheering in itself, given him by the justice, that gentleman had also made him a promise that, until such time as the

reformation of the valley had been at least partially effected, he would constitute himself a regular attendant at St. Michael's Church, and that, by a vigilant exercise of his civil power, he would second the endeavours of the new shepherd to make the unwilling sheep of his parish listen to his voice.

CHAPTER XI.

‘IS HE DEAD, KATE?’

THE pious resignation felt and expressed by Helen Rutherford upon the eve of her lover's death proved to have been no mere transitory emotion. It lasted after the grave had swallowed its prey, and, along with that prey, her past life, with all its joys, hopes, and aspirations. Not a murmuring or repining word fell from her lips, and by her gentle and composed demeanour, she made, in the words of an old writer, ‘even misery amiable.’ Yet, withal, how desolate she felt! How changed did the world, and all it contained, appear to her! and how difficult did she find it to realise that it was indeed the same world wherein she had been living a month ago! The house in which she still remained, full as it was of Henry's memory, seemed like an empty shrine, every object within it a cast-off garment of the dead. The sky, the woods, the fields, the flowers, had lost, with his presence, their life and beauty. Each thing in Nature whereon her eye rested bore for Helen that resemblance to its former self which is possessed by an embalmed body whence the soul has departed. By the side of that newly-closed grave, her existence appeared to have come to a strange and awful pause—the past gone for ever, and buried within it; the future, as yet unentered upon, stretching before her, blank, unhopeful, and barren. To spend the remainder of her days in meditation and prayer, as a preparation for rejoining her beloved after death, was all of happiness that earth now seemed capable

of affording. But, in the impulse which had at first seized her to seclude herself for this purpose by withdrawal from companionship with her friends, Helen had been taught by Father Christopher to recognise a subtle selfishness; and resolving, in obedience to that holy man's direction, to subdue, even in the indulgence of her grief, all self-love and self-seeking, she had offered her services as assistant in tending Lady Anderton, whose case still called forth the deepest anxiety upon the part of her relatives, and had been rewarded for the effort by finding some distraction from her own trouble in the task. The alarm, however, which was now experienced respecting Lady Anderton was of another character, and arose from a different cause from that felt upon her account before Henry's death. No longer was it feared that her life would pay the forfeiture of her close attendance upon her injured son; for since the day of his decease, upon which had occurred the crisis of her illness, she had been regaining health with a rapidity almost marvellous. Still comparatively young, and possessed of a magnificent constitution, her frame had fought against and conquered all mere physical disease; and the fever being gone, nothing remained but a consequent weakness, which, it was hoped, would speedily yield to careful nursing and increased appetite. But whilst solicitude concerning her bodily state had thus been rendered unnecessary, the same could not be affirmed with regard to Lady Anderton's mental condition. The nicer mechanism of the brain seemed slow to adjust itself; and that that organ still suffered from the effects of the past, or present inflammation, was evidenced by a certain incoherence of speech, and by a look of restless excitement in the eyes, amounting occasionally even to wildness. Not unreasonable, therefore, was the apprehension now entertained by the afflicted household, that unless her mind should become more settled before Lady Anderton learned the news of

Henry's death, it might, as a result of the shock, be permanently thrown off its balance. Actuated by this dread, the sad truth had, with the exercise of much caution, been kept from her knowledge; but with each day its concealment was growing more difficult. Her constant inquiries respecting the dead youth—that first-born child upon whom had been expended the strongest affection of her passionate nature—had so far been met by assurances—unjustifiable, perhaps, in their falsity—that, though out of all danger, he was still too weak to visit her, and messages, purporting to come from the adjoining chamber, in which she was given to understand he yet lay, had been delivered to her by a kind-hearted, though not very judicious, maid, who shared in the duties of the sick-room. But that the deception practised upon her could not much longer be kept up was plain to all. With every advance towards restoration to strength, its discovery necessarily became more imminent; and, as had been anticipated, no sooner had the invalid been permitted to rise than she expressed a determination to seek her son's chamber. For one whole day after she had regained power to walk without assistance, the ingenuity of her attendants, taxed to the utmost, served to hinder the execution of this design; but upon the afternoon of the second, when, under the supposition that she was in a sound sleep, she had been left with no other guardians than Kate and Helen, Lady Anderton suddenly rose from her couch, and, before the girls could interpose to prevent it, passed from the room, and made her way to that in which Henry had suffered and died. With a view to prevent pain to the survivors, everything belonging to its late occupant or that could suggest remembrance of him, had been carefully removed from the apartment. None of Henry's clothes lay about it—not a wrap he had worn, nor a necessary of the toilet he had used; and the room had the unmistakable look of one

which owned no nightly tenant. Struck with terror by its tell-tale aspect, the poor mother, with white face and distended eyes, gazed at the unruffled bed and round the empty chamber. Then, turning to the trembling girls, who had followed her, she seized Kate by the shoulder, grasping her with the fictitious strength engendered of delirium, and exclaimed, in a tone of frenzied eagerness,

'Where is my son? They have lied to me, the false jades that said he was here! O, where is my son? where, where is my son?' she went on, her voice rising with each repetition of the inquiry.

'Dearest mother, compose yourself,' murmured Kate soothingly, her own cheek pallid with alarm. 'Beseech you, return with me to your chamber, and I will tell you all. Come, dearest mother, you are ill, and must needs make yourself worse by this excitement. Prithee, calm yourself.'

'Compose yourself, quotha! Prithee calm yourself, forsooth! Girl, mock me not thus!' ejaculated the distraught lady, in wrathful tones. Then sinking her voice to a whisper, which thrilled through each nerve of her listeners, she asked, with startling emphasis, 'Is he *dead*, Kate? Is he *dead*?'

Cowering beneath the gaze of the dark strangely gleaming eyes, which seemed to be piercing her through and through, Kate found it impossible to speak; and reading the answer in her face, Lady Anderton, in a low key, which gradually swelled into a shrill discordant cry, began, still grasping the anguish-stricken girl:

'He is dead, Henry is dead, my son is dead, my darling is dead! They have slain him, they have killed him, they have murdered him! Ah, see! 'tis written up there on the wall i' letters of blood—*his* blood, Henry Anderton, dead, dead, dead!' and flinging her daughter violently

from her, she rent the air with a wild shriek of fury and despair.

That shriek, ringing through the house, caused Sir John, William, and several of the servants to hurry breathlessly towards the spot whence it had issued, and when the Baronet, ahead of the rest, entered the room so full of melancholy associations, it was to be greeted by the sight of his wife, clad in a long blue dressing-gown, her black hair unbound, and streaming down the shoulders, and an undefinable something in her face which struck him with a sharp pang of pain and terror. And, indeed, by no on-lookers could the sad fact fail to be discerned, that the direst calamity from which humanity can suffer had overtaken the beautiful and gifted mistress of Erleston Grange. On a sudden, beneath the shock of a monstrous wave of grief and horror, the injured vessel of her mind, already threatened by shipwreck, had dismally foundered. Madness, that foul fever-fiend of the brain, had entered in and taken possession of the temple of her intellect, and from the windows of her once lovely eyes—now turning wildly from side to side, like those of an untamed animal freshly caught in the snare—he glared out defiantly. A death in life, more appalling than physical dissolution, involving a separation more complete than that of the coffin and grave, now divided that wife from the husband, who looked at her with clasped hands and pitiful tear-blind eyes, and from the children who loved her. In fearful isolation she stood clinging to the post of her dead son's bed, surrounded by a gulf as impassable, and infinitely more horrible, than the river of death. A vacant unrecognising stare rewarded the tender phrases with which Sir John presently endeavoured to persuade her to return to her own room; and when, venturing to use a little gentle force, he strove to detach the white hands from their hold, she flew at him in fury, and would have torn his face with her nails had not

William, with a firm but careful grasp, pinioned her arms from behind, and thus, aided by one or two of the servants, conveyed her back to her own apartment. That night, owing to the violence of her frenzy, Lady Anderton was obliged to be strapped to her bed; and when the morning dawned, Sir John, who had watched through its hours in her room, looked older by many years, whilst his hair from iron-gray had turned to the purest white.

CHAPTER XII.

A DEBATE AT WOLFFESFORD.

A LITTLE beyond the entrance to the glen; in a direction opposite to where stood the hamlet of Wolfesford, occurs a slight bend in the valley; and some half mile farther on a rude stile, at the time of our story, guarded the entrance to a narrow footway leading from the rough main road up a gentle declivity to the right. Skirting upon the one hand the confines of a wood, the path upon the other was bounded by fields of tall grain, already green in the ear, now standing motionless, saturated with light and heat, and anon billowing in the summer wind like rippling sea-waves. These fields, with a stretch of meadow-land beyond them devoted to the pasturage of certain sleek kine, belonged to a Master Nicholas Weston, the most well-to-do farmer in Waradale, and the footpath conducted to his house, situated mid-way up the brow, and distinguished by the name of 'Th' White Heawse o' Rudston Edge.' A wicket-gate admitted to a small patch of garden in front of the house, well stocked with old-fashioned sweet-smelling flowers; whilst over the trellised porch which shaded the door clustered bunches of fragrant June roses. The house, which had been built by its present proprietor upon the site of a much smaller one, occupied by his forefathers as far back as the tradition of the neighbourhood extended, consisted of a wing or body two stories high, plastered and thatched, and of a heavy-looking projecting gable. Attached to the

front wall of the gable was a clumsy stone bench, and upon that bench, one warm Saturday afternoon, just a month after Sir Paul Cunningham had made his appearance in the district, were seated two men. Of these, one was the owner of the farm, a healthy comely fellow of muscular build, with brown locks and ruddy cheeks, who, notwithstanding that nearly sixty years had passed over his head, appeared to be yet scarcely past his prime. Though lacking traces of culture, there was no want of intelligence in his face; and the impress of a happy genial nature was so indelibly stamped upon it, that in spite of the thoughtful, even melancholy, expression it at present wore, he looked emphatically 'a man of cheerful yesterdays.' His companion, who, though but little older than himself, had the withered skin and stooping frame of age, was Abel Hardinge, the musician and tavern-keeper. From youth upwards these men had been special intimates and gossips, although in what consisted the attraction which each possessed for the other, it would be hard to say, for their characters were as diverse as their appearance—Nicholas uniting to a vigorous constitution much energy and firmness of purpose; whilst Abel, as his countenance betokened, was deficient in strength of will, though gifted with more refinement and susceptibility of feeling than his friend. Since the exchange of greetings, which had taken place on the visitor's arrival at the farm some ten minutes ago, neither of the men had spoken a syllable, but had sat side by side gloomily gazing at the prospect before them; and when at length the silence was broken by Abel, his words bore no immediate reference to the subject which was occupying the thoughts and weighing upon the spirits of both.

'Eh, but it's a bonny view we have fro' here, Nicholas,' he remarked, in a somewhat quavering voice; 'winter or summer aw'm ne'er stall 't o' lookin' at it. How pretty

th' river is, windin' in an eawt down theer among th' trees, wi' th' sunloight glintin' upo' it; and them hills ayont look reet lovely to-day, wi' their shadowy dingles, brawn cloofs, and dark woods. Theer's sommat abeawt them hills, Nicholas, lyin' theer so still and peaceful-like, as se'ms to get into a man's very heart and lift it up aboon th' troubles o' yearth. Th' seet o' 'em this afternoon's soothin' me just loike th' cantions my mother used to sing when aw wur a little lad an' had fall'n and yurt mysel'. Faith, aw wish aw'd my fiddle here, aw could lief play a tune neaw, tho' I hannot had th' sperrit to draw bow across it this mony a day.'

' Certes, aw wish thou hadst, Abel; aw'd be fain to yer thee play a bit,' responded Nicholas; 'for when thou'rt i' th' humour for't thou canst mak' that fiddle o' thine speak. Theer's music i' thy soul, mon, or thou couldst ne'er bring it eawt o' them strings as thou dost; an' it's same music i' thy inside, aw reckon, as mak's thee *feel* th' beauty o' th' lonscape as well as *see* 't. Hey, mon, aw've often thowt it's a lucky thing for thee 'at theer'll be gowden harps i' heaven.'

' Heaven!' repeated Abel, with bitterness, the look of anxiety which had vanished for a moment in his enjoyment of the scenery returning. 'Dunnot talk to me o' heaven, Nicholas; th' gate o' it wur noan too broad afore, but neaw they'n mad' it that streight wi' their foins an' prisons an' hangin's, that aw'm sadly feared aw'll never see th' inside o' it. An' to tell the truth, Nicholas,' he added, after a little pause of hesitation, 'aw've nighly mad' up my mind to goo to th' church to-morrow morn, an' so have a mony oathers beside. 'Twur o' this aw cam' up to fratch wi' thee abeawt; an' theer's to be a gatherin' o' th' neebours i' my heawse this e'en to talk matters o'er. Aw thow't maybe thou'd like to goo back wi' me, an' hear what they'n gotten to say?'

'Ay, i' faith aw *will* goo back wi' thee, Abel,' replied Nicholas promptly, 'an' aw'll do th' best aw con to hould th' poor folk off makin' ony such bargain wi' the deevil. By my troth, aw'd liefer th' plague wur i' ivery heawse i' Waradale, nor that one family i' th' whole country-side should turn traitor to their religion; an' as for thee, O Abel, Abel mon, thou munnot do it!'

'Ay, it's mighty easy sayin' thou munnot do 't, Nicholas,' returned the musician crustily; 'but dost kneaw what'll becom o' me an aw dunnot? Why, mon, if th' parson tells truth, they'll first sell up ivery rag an' stick as belungs me, an' then send me to prison for not havin' enoo' to pay th' foine wi'. It's th' prison 'at scears me, Nicholas; just bethink thee heaw't would be to be shut up i'side stone walls, wi' ne'er a glimpse o' th' green fields or trees. Dame, aw couldn't abeer it; aw'd rather by half they'd shoot me an' ha' done wi' it. But heaw cooms it, mon, 'at thou'rt so firmed agin gooin' to church thyself'; dost think thou canst keep on payin' th' 20*l.* a month? By my word, an' thou canst, thou'rt a deevil richer nor aw took thee for!'

'Nawe, Abel, thou kneaws reet well 'at aw connot pay't,' replied Nicholas, shaking his head sadly; 'for a' th' good Lord's blessed me wi' lond and money so far beyond my desert, it 'ud tak' ivery penny aw have an' moor to pay th' foine for three months;* but wi' the help o' God, aw'll ne'er give in—no, not by the breadth of a yure; an' Mary's o' th' same moind, bless her! Th' future looks as dark as a fox's meawth, there's no gainsayin' that; but we ha' sattled it atween eawrsel's 'at we'll go to prison, or to *deeth* even, if th' warst cooms to th' warst, rather than save eawr land or eawr lives at th' price o' eawr sows.

* 20*l.* was equal in value to 250*l.* of our money, consequently the fine for three months would be equivalent to 750*l.*

Hey, mon, think o' what Father Christopher said last Sunday after Mass !'

. 'Ay, Nicholas, aw hav' thowt o' it mony a toime, aw warrant thee, an' aw'm nigh druv dateless wi' waverin',' responded Abel; 'for one minute when aw ca' to mind th' words o' yon holy mon 'at God Almighty Hissel' sent us to tak' th' place o' good Father Maitland, aw'm a' for houldin' eawt; an' agin, when aw pictur to mysel' th' consequences, aw feel 'at aw cannot do't. But coom, it's hoigh toime awwur startin' for whoam, Nicholas,' he added, rising hurriedly, 'for the meetin's to be at foive o'clock an' as aw see by th' sun-dial it wants but little fro' th' hour.'

'Well, it'll not want lung, for certain,' assented the former, rising also; 'an' as thae'rt i' such a peighl, aw'll not keep thee waitin'. So just coom into th' heawse, Abel an' bid good den to th' dear owd dame, while aw don a clean jerkin, an' then aw'll goo wi' thee straight 'way.'

Following his companion, Master Hardinge passed beneath the rose-covered porch and exchanged a few words with a plain-featured but pleasant-looking elderly woman who sat at her weaving in the tidy comfortably-furnished kitchen; and in a few seconds later, the two men were descending the hill in single file; Abel taking the precedence, with pursed mouth and knitted brow, a prey to tormenting indecision, and Nicholas treading in his steps experiencing that composure which invariably attend fixed determination, yet casting mournful glances at the flourishing crops, sown by his own diligent hand upon acres which for generations had belonged to his ancestors but which by this time next year would he expected have passed from his possession, forfeited for no other reason than adherence to the faith of those ancestors—that faith which until within a few years had been professed by a Christendom.

Upon reaching Wolfesford, the friends found the guest-room of the little tavern already filled to overflowing, the company comprising women as well as men, although the number of the latter greatly preponderated. A low hum of conversation greeted their ears as they entered the doorway, but this ceased upon their presence being perceived, and with a hearty but quiet salutation, room was made for both to pass forward towards the centre of the apartment. On gaining this, Abel proposed that Nicholas should preside over the meeting, and keep order in the conversation or debate which it was intended to hold, and the proposition was carried by universal consent, for amongst the inhabitants of Waradale not an individual was more generally liked or esteemed than Farmer Weston. The task of keeping order, however, bade fair to be an easy one, since, whilst it was obvious that each member of it was under the influence of deep excitement, the assembly was singularly subdued and undemonstrative in conduct. Not a voice had as yet been raised above its ordinary tone; and when, in response to an invitation that he would do so, Master Weston rose to address the crowded room, silence reigned in every part of it.

‘Freends and neebours,’ began Nicholas, a look of distress on his kindly face as he glanced round at the gloomy anxious countenances raised to meet his own,—‘freends and neebours, aw’m fain o’ th’ opportunity o’ speaking to yo this e’en, an’ aw think it’s weel as we should ha’ met together to talk abeawt th’ troubles an’ dangers ’at are hangin’ o’er us a’, for we ha’ olez bin loike brothers and sisters i’ Waradale. We’s not be so fur lung tho’, an we dunnot stick to th’ owd faith, deer freends, for then we’ll ha’ lost “th’ unity o’ th’ spirit an’ th’ bond o’ peace,” as th’ Holy Scriptur’ ca’s it, th’ which God forbid! Aw’m weel aweer, heawever, good neebours,’ continued the

farmer, again casting his eyes round the apartment, 'that we ha' been placed i' a dreadfu' stret by them 'at ha' thowt fit to sot up a church o' their own makin' i' eawr lond, an' 'at are strivin' to o'erturn that 'at eaur Blessed Lord Himsel' builted upo' th' rock o' Peter. We ha' 'scaped so fur, thank Heaven, from th' vile laws 'at th' Parliament's mad' agin Catholics; but neaw at len'th they'n brought us to this pass i' th' valley, that we ha' naught afore us but th' choice o' two evils—oather to suffer sorely i' this world, or to put eaursel's i' jeopardy o' sufferin' for iver i' the world to coom. Alack for pity, but it's hard to beer! Nathless, freends, aw tell yo aw ha' mad' up my'own moind to stond fast to eaur holy releegion, so 's what happens me, an' aw trusten to th' Almighty, 'at yo'll a' do th' same, for an we nobbut stay i' the Ark of God we'll be a' reet i' the end'; but an we step eaut o' 't into the new-fangled boat 'at they'n set afloatin' alongside it, we's perish i' th' flood o' temptation and sin. Heighat neebours, let's do as Father Christopher craved o' us last Sunday; let's make Waradale a spectacle to men an' angels for the constancy o' 'ts inhabitants; dunnot let theer be a mon, woman, or chylt i' th' whole valley 'at'll giv' in to set fuut i'side the Protestant church. But heaw con aw hoppen 'at yo'll hearken to me,' he sighed, in conclusion, 'an yo winnot give heed to th' counsel o' yon holy mon himsel', or if you winnot moind th' words 'at good Father Maitland spoke afore he wur took away—the Lord bless and protect him wheeriver he is!'

Ejaculations of 'Amen, amen!' resounded upon all sides as Nicholas reseated himself; and after a short resumption of the silence, interrupted only by an occasional sob from a woman, or a suppressed groan from one of the sterner sex, a call was made for 'Peter Chadwick!' and a chorus of voices immediately repeated, 'Ay, ay, let's yer what Peter's gotten to say neaw.'

‘Come, Peter,’ urged Nicholas, bending forward to glance at a sturdy-looking middle-aged man, small in stature, with round head, and black bead-like eyes, who sat on the same settle with himself. ‘Come, now, gie us yo’re opinion abeawt matters.’

The individual addressed, who resided in one of the five houses which composed the hamlet, and who kept a kind of shop or store for the sale of groceries, delf-ware, haberdashery, and other miscellaneous goods, fidgeted for some moments uneasily in his seat. Then springing up, and resting one foot upon the bench from which he had risen, he said, in a clear rolling voice :

‘Good folk a’, you axe for my opinion o’ what we’d best do i’ th’ plaguey plight ‘at we’n bin putten in by th’ law-makers, an’ yo shall hav’ it. It’s a’ very foine, by my word, th’ way Maister Weston’s bin talkin’, and it’s moighty grond advice he’s gi’en us, nawe deawt, an’, an we wur nobbut a’ saints, we should follow it eawt, belike. But fur one, neebours, aw own, ‘at aw’m not fashion’t o’ th’ stuff martyrs ‘re mad’ eawt o’; and so, aw tell yo plain, ‘at aw’m fur gooin’ to th’ Protestant sarvice to-morrow morn, an’ so’re my wife an’ childer, an’ aw recommend yo a’ to do th’ same. Look yo, neaw, aw’ll just put th’ whole case afore yo i’ a few words,’ he pursued, placing the tips of his fingers together, and assuming an argumentative tone, ‘that scurvy fellow, Sir Paul Cunningham—a murrain on him!—has ca’d at my heawse mony a toime sin he coom’d to th’ valley, an’ he’s gav’ me to onderstond th’ law pratty weel. Aw daur say he’s done same by yo a’; but nathless aw’s just goo o’re it again. Th’ foine, yo see, for not attendin’ th’ new church had used to be a shillin’ a week for poor folk, but neaw, as ye kneaw, the Government’s raised it to twenty pounds a month for rich an’ poor alike. Well, come to-morrow, it’ll be just four week sin’ St. Michael’s wur mad’ Protestant, an’ onybody

'at isn't i'side it then, 'll ha' earn't th' foine. Well, o' the Monday after, th' parson says, th' names o' all i' th' parish 'at ha' bin absent 'll be reported to th' joostice o' th' peace, an' joodgment 'll be gi'en agin them; and three months after that, them 'at cannot pay 'll be hauled off to prison, an' kep theer till they conform—that means, yo kneaw, till they turn Protestant. Well, good folk—for by th' quality o' Erleston Glen an' Maister Weston theer—theer's not one o' us, aw'll be sworn, 'at could pay th' foine, not if we wur to sell a' we hav' i' th' warld. Th' question, then, yo' see, 's jost this—an' theer's no use shuttin' yo're een or blinkin' at it—will yo goo to prison, an' be kep theer a' yo're lives, or till yo're turned cawt beggars? or will you save yo'rsels an' yo're families by obeyin' th' laws? Yo mun *cweant* th' *cost* o' stondin' fast, as Weston would ha' yo do, an', for my part, aw tell you aw *hav'* cweanted it, an', beshrew me, but aw's bē at th' sarvice to-morrow. At the same time, heawever, aw warn yo a' 'at if theer's a mon among yo 'at iver daurs to ca' me a Protestant, aw'll knock him down; fur, for a' aw'm gooin' to th' church, aw'll be no moor a Protestant nor th' best of yo.'

A murmur of mingled applause and disapprobation greeted the conclusion of the storekeeper's remarks; and, when this had subsided, a tall corpulent man, who stood leaning against the wall near the door, took up the speech.

'Yo'n done well, Peter,' he observed, shaking his head significantly, 'to bid us *cweant* th' *cost* o' sticking to *cawr* relegion; or, rather (for aw believe we's a' do that i' *cawr* hearts), o' refoosin' to goo to th' heretic sarvice. Th' reckonin' 'll be naught but ruin for us a' i' th' end; that's as plain as dayloight; an' it behoves each mon to consider as to whether he con beer it. But, neebours, there's some i' th' vale i' a worse plight nor oathers, an' that's us as is tenants o' th' minister—plague upo' him for a

black-hearted villain!—for he's threaten'd to raise th' rents o' eawr farms, an' to bring us to starvation afore th' three months is eawt, an we dunnot obey th' laws. So, God forgive me! but aw'm goin' to yer th' preachin' to-morrow, loik Peter Chadwick.'

'Alack for mercy, but aw'm fashed to yer thee say't, John Dean,' protested a sweet-faced delicate-looking woman, who sat near him, with dry eyes and an air of perfect composure, clasping the hand of a boy of fourteen who stood by her side. 'Aw'm reet deawn sorry to yer it. Heigh, John, just bethink thee, mon, o' th' shortness o' life an' the length o' eternity! Ha, what matters it abeawt sufferin' a bit here, an we nobbut merit to live hereafter wi' Him as suffer'd for 's a'! An', John, thou kneaws 'at aw'm a tenant o' Sir Paul's, too; an' aw'll tell thee summat, an' yo, good freends a', though aw'm but a poor widow wi' foive childer, an' none but this boy here able to help me work on th' bit o' land, th' minister's menaced me wi' distraint for two years' back rent 'at good Father Maitland forgav' me on account o' the failure aw had wi' my crops. He says, heawever, 'at he'll give me a full discharge for 't, an aw'll but promise to lea' off bein' a Papist, as he ca's it. But, as aw towld him, aw'll dee sooner. Aw'll trusten to th' God o' th' fatherless and th' widow to tak' care o' me an' mine, but aw'll not offend Him. An' Jim's ready, too, t' hazard a' for 's faith. Ar't not, my lad?'

Jim replied by a pressure of his mother's hand, and an affirmative gesture; and, looking at the two with an admiring expression in his blue eyes, a young man who occupied the next seat to Peter Chadwick remarked:

'Hey, but thou'rt a good woman, Dame Wortley, an' that lad o' thine's a good lad. But, certes, aw hope to God yo'll giv' in afore yo let yoursel's be took to prison, for it's little yo kneaw, oather of yo, what koind o' places them prisons is. Aw yerd a queer tale abeawt one o' 'em

i' Orrleigh this forenoon, neebours,' he pursued, directing his observations to the general company. 'Aw'd gone to th' town upo' a message fur my feyther, an' who should aw meet i' th' street, but a cousin o' my mother's 'at we hannot sin, or yeard o', this lung toime. Weel, aw war-rant yo, aw didn't kneaw him fro' Adam, he wur that changed an' aged wi' a sickness he's had; an' he'd scarce a rag to 's back, aw tell yo, tho' he had used to wear as tidy a doublet as ony mon i' Orrleigh. He kneaw'd me, heawever; an' when we fell to talkin' an' aw'd fun' eawt who he wur, aw took him to th' Sun Inn to give him a pint o' yale, an' he tow'd me then 'at he'd bin i' the Fleet Prison in Manchester for recusancy, as they ca' th' crime he'd bin guilty o'. An,' trust me, but it fair sicken'd me to yer th' description he gav' me o' th' filth, an' stenches, an' bad food, an' th' fevers an' plagues, and suchloike horrors, as th' prisoners theer ha' gotten to beer. Ye see, good folk, he wur loike Maister Weston, an' Dame Wortley, an' th' rest o' you 'at 're o' the same way o' thinkin'—he wur determin'd he'd never give in: an' he let hisselt' be sowld up an' a' afore he'd goo to th' church. But, faith, th' prison soon mad' him sing another mak' o' a tune, an', if a's true he says, it'll do no less wi' mony anoather mon, or aw'm mista'en.'

'Ay, ay, lad, aw've yerd sommut o' th' same sort afore,' observed an elderly man, who had, so far, been listening to the conversation in silence. 'They're feaw holes, theer's nawe deawt, are them prisons; an' if ony o' us goo's theer, we's be great fool's i' my opinion. For i' verity, as fur as aw con see, freends, we's be doin' no great harm by obeyin' th' law. Yo see, we con goo to Mass, early i' th' morn, at th' Grange, as we ha' done every Sunday sin Father Maitland wur took away; an' we con attend to all th' dooties o' eawr releegion same as iver. It's nobbut just sittin' an hour or so in th' owd church, an'—'

'Nay, nay, Jacob Smith, dunnot deceive thyself, mon,' interrupted Nicholas Weston; 'dunnot deceive thyself'; aw'll tell thee what it'll nobbut be. It'll nobbut be actin' th' hypocrite. It'll nobbut be bowin' deawn to th' gowden caulf. 'It'll nobbut be denyin' Him 'at suffered for 's upon th' rood. It'll nobbut be sinnin', an' deprivin' thyself o' th' grace an' favour o' God, 'at 'll ne'er rest upo' wrong-doers.'

'Neaw then, Weston, neaw then, let's ha' neaw moor o' that mak' o' talk, an' 't please you,' exclaimed Peter Chadwick angrily. 'You kneaw weel 'at we a' set a deal o' store by your opinion; but, for a' that, aw'm not gooin' to hav' yo sittin' i' joodgment upo' my conduct—for, mark me, aw'm gooin' to church, so's who else is, an' aw think wi' Jacob theer'll be no greeat harm in 't.'

'Well, well, Peter, we'll not quarrel,' returned Nicholas sorrowfully. 'An' aw'm not wishin' to judge yo or ony oather mon. God kneaws how hard it is to stond to th' reet, an' He'll ha' mercy, I wot, upo' them 'at fall. But aw mun lea' you neaw, good folk,' he continued, rising; 'my dame's bin a bit ailin' for aboon a week, an' aw dunnot loike to stay away fro' her much langer. Afore aw goo, heawever,' he subjoined, after a moment's pause, during which he had stooped to pick up his hat, 'yo mun giv' me leave to say one word moor, neebours, an' aw trusten yo'll believe 'at aw say it i' no way o' boastin'. Peter Chadwick has bid you cweant th' cost o' remainin' faithfu' to yo're releegion, an' it's the reet thing to do. But aw tell yo, dear freends, 'at theer's two ways o' oweanting' it, an' 'at th' way my Mary an' me's reckon'd it th' balance is a' on th' side o' howldin' fast to God an' resistin' th' deevil. Th' Holy Scripture says, yo kneaw, "Blessed are they 'at overcome;" an' whot for, aw wonner, should us sinfu' creatures shrink fro' poverty and sufferin' when th' Lord o' Glory hadn't wheer to lay His head, an'

when He bore th' cruel scourge and cross for sins as wasn't His own? Aw've bin a hard-workin' mon, an' aw *had* expected to end my days by my own hearthstone i' peace; but, by the strength and grace o' God, aw'm ready to goo to prison or deeoath for His Holy Name an' His Holy Church.'

'An' by my word, aw'll cast in my lot wi' thee, Nicholas!' cried Abel Hardinge, springing up and grasping his friend's hand. 'Aw'm fair worn eawt wi' deawtin' an' waverin', bu't yo ha' settled my moind at last. It's God's truth thou hast spoken, mon. Th' future loife's o' moor valley nor th' present one.'

'Eh, ay, 'tis so surely,' ejaculated John Dean. 'An' aw'll tell yo what, Weston,' he pursued, advancing towards him with outstretched arm: 'what yo ha' said has med' me inclin't to think matters o're again; an' aw'll do't, aw promise yo. Surely, 'twould be a grand thing to over-coom!'

'God bless yo, John!' replied the farmer, warmly returning the proffered clasp. 'Ay, think it o're again, mon, do; an' may th' A'mighty help yo to come to a reet decision!' And with a few words of special encouragement and farewell to Abel and a general adieu for the rest of the company, Nicholas Weston left the tavern, and shortly afterwards the assembly dispersed, those who had composed it seeking their homes in very various frames of mind.

CHAPTER XIII.

ST. MICHAEL'S A REFORMED CHURCH.

ALTHOUGH the first month of his residence in Waradale had constituted also his honeymoon, the Rev. Paul Cunningham had, as we have seen from the previous chapter, made diligent use of his time in paying unwelcome visits to his poorer parishioners (he had not yet ventured to call at Erleston Grange or Hall-i'-th'-Wood), and in endeavouring, by fair means or foul, to induce them to attend his ministrations in the church. On the fourth Sunday after his settlement in the district, which—as being that upon which absence from the established service would first entail severe legal punishment—would crucially test the success of his labours, he awaited with much interest and some anxiety the result of the summons sent forth by the metal tongues of St. Michael's belfry. This proved to be more satisfactory than he had anticipated; for, brought face to face with a choice between utter ruin and outward compliance, more than half the inhabitants of the valley had naturally selected the latter alternative. Accordingly, as the last stroke of the bells ceased to vibrate, a small party of men and women, who had awaited each other at the foot of the hill, trooped into the church, and with countenances angry, sullen, or distressed, in agreement with the dispositions of their respective owners, seated themselves upon the benches nearest the door. Amongst these reluctant conformists, notwithstanding the assurance he had, on the evening before, given to his

friend Nicholas Weston, of his determination to adopt a contrary line of conduct, was Abel Hardinge. The poor man had been reduced again to a vacillating state of mind, in less than an hour after the brave yeoman's departure from the tavern, through the agency of his son Miles, who had been absent from the gathering—having been unexpectedly called, in his capacity of leech, to pay a visit at a distance of several miles—but who had returned home immediately after its dispersion. Like his neighbour Peter Chadwick, Miles was indisposed to endure martyrdom of any description on account of his religion; and possessing great influence over his weak and timid father, he had soon managed to shake his good resolution—formed in a moment of excitement—and had eventually succeeded in persuading him to repair to church at the appointed hour on the following morning. On his way thither, however, the unhappy musician kept protesting to his son, as well as to every acquaintance he encountered, that he had only brought himself to submit to the law upon this occasion in order to gain time for reflection, and that he should in all probability not repeat the act of compliance; and deceiving *himself* in the half-conscious endeavour to impose upon others, he thus contrived to gain some alleviation from the pain of an uneasy conscience. To the great joy of his pious wife and of good Dame Wortley, whose cottage stood within a hundred yards of his own, John Dean's redemption of the promise he had made to Farmer Weston, to reconsider his decision, issued in his remaining at home; and besides him the band of intended conformists had been lessened by more than one individual, through means of that good man's precepts of the preceding evening, enforced by example, and powerfully supplemented by a solemn exhortation to constancy uttered this morning by Father Christopher. As we have stated, however, the larger proportion of the population of Wara-

dale, actuated by dread of the terrible consequences attached to an opposite course, followed that already adopted almost universally by the peasantry throughout the kingdom, of yielding a hypocritical obedience to the hated statutes. And that they should have done so is surely not to be wondered at. Scarcely, indeed, when we consider the overwhelming nature of the temptation to which they were subjected, can we bring ourselves to blame them.

When his unwilling congregation entered the church, Sir Paul, vested in his surplice, was standing before his reading-desk. But although ready to do so, he did not commence the service until some minutes later, when Justice Windwood and his daughter, followed by one or two servants from Ridgwood Manor, made their somewhat tardy appearance. As he passed into the building, and slowly advanced up the aisle, the worthy functionary's gaze wandered with a triumphant expression over the rustic group which composed the first-fruits of that reformation he had so determinately threatened to effect in the valley. But his look of gratification was speedily exchanged for one of extreme annoyance, as, from his seat in the transept of the small cruciform church, he noted the conduct of the 'reformed.' Encouraging each other by a promise to act in concert, the poor people had resolved, in a consultation they had held outside it, that, although forced to attend the Protestant church, they would not join in the service. The risk of disobeying the *letter* of the law was, as they pitifully complained, too dreadful to be confronted, but against its *spirit* they might, as they thought, contend with safety. When, therefore, the young clergyman rose to read out the verses of Scripture, and the invitation to a general confession, with which the new order of public worship began, every Catholic remained seated; and notwithstanding that Abraham Taylor, Sir

Paul's servant and factotum and *pro temp.* churchwarden, stood by, directing them when to stand or kneel, they obstinately retained the same posture until the conclusion of the service. Furious not so much at the contempt thus manifested towards the ritual, framed, as those who had taken part in its compilation declared, beneath the direct inspiration of the Holy Ghost, as at that shown to his own presence and authority, Anthony Windwood would have interrupted the service in order to give vent to his displeasure at this misconduct, and to utter menaces of punishment, had not Sir Paul begged him by signs, and by a whispered entreaty, which he left his desk to make, to pass it over for the moment, and to allow him to deal with it in the sermon which he was about to deliver. Of this sermon, which contained some information alarming to the bulk of its hearers, respecting the position in which their pretended conformity had placed them, and which will afford an idea of the style of preaching commonly indulged in from the reformed pulpits of the day, we will give some slight account and a few extracts :

The text, taken from the revised translation of the Scriptures, was Revelation xviii. 4, 5, and 6 : ' And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works : in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double.' In an explanatory introduction to his discourse, the fiery young zealot, standing now in the very spot whence the beloved pastor, who had been so ruthlessly torn from their midst, had been wont to address his reverent and devoted flock, informed his auditors that the great Babylon, ' the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth,' to whom these words

referred, signified the Church of Rome; and passed on to congratulate those who had, as he professed to believe, 'come out of her.' 'Ha, my friends,' he exclaimed, 'how unhappy hath hitherto been your lot! Of what foul crimes must you not have been guilty, in that, so long after the remainder of this our once altogether benighted country hath received enlightenment through the outpouring of gospel truth, you should still have been left to grope in the blackness of Egyptian darkness. Thank God, however—for well it behoveth you so to do—that at length the fame of your misery did reach into Manchester, the Goshen, as we may account it, of these northern parts; and that from thence deliverance hath been sent you. And of what nature is this deliverance? Such, verily, as should be celebrated by ringing of bells, lighting of bonfires, sounding of trumpets, thundering of ordnance, and all outward expressions of joy. *Horret Animus!* Believe me, when I think of the vile teachings and superstitious practices of the Papistry, of the idolatry of the Mass—the which, by some of our primest theologians, hath been accounted a more damnable iniquity than adultery or murder—of the hell-bred doctrine respecting good works, and of others, to the elucidation and overthrowing whereof I shall direct myself anon, my spirit is moved within me, and my indignation stirred, so that, of a truth, the very mention of the name Papist or Pope will readily transport me beyond myself.' After this preamble followed a long account of the benefits of the Reformation, which consisted, according to Sir Paul, in freedom from the bondage of Papal authority and other ecclesiastical tyranny; in the abolishment of fasting, lengthy and repeated prayers, superstitious almsgivings, and mortifications; the annulling of monkish vows and clerical celibacy; and, finally, in the permission given to the laity to read and interpret for themselves the Holy Scriptures,

without the intervention of a 'bloodthirsty Church.' Then came a glowing description of the new Church, with its pure and reformed doctrines; and having thus shown cause for joy and thankfulness on the part of the enforced conformists, the young clergyman proceeded to administer to them a severe reproof for their demeanour during service, which, as he remarked, 'seemed less like a willing breaking away from the galling yoke of the Man of Sin, and a grateful acceptance of gospel freedom, than the pettishness of froward children whose fingers have been held back from the flames wherewith they would injuriously have played.' Then stretching forth his hands towards the company of heartsore and indignant Catholics, all of whom had heard Mass at an early hour that morning, and none of whom had any intention of forsaking his own religion, he went through a form of welcoming them as converts, and continued: 'Seeing that you have now, by coming to church, yielded due obedience, from what motive soever, to the just and wise statutes enacted by a God-fearing Parliament, the law will henceforward regard you as Protestants. It becometh, therefore, my duty now to warn you against the awful sin of relapse, and to instruct you concerning the penalty thereof, which, of a surety, is terrible, though righteous. This penalty, as peradventure you are not apprised, is death of the body and of the soul—hanging here, damnation hereafter; for it is confessed upon all hands that an English apostate Papist cannot be saved. Should it then so befall, which may God forfend! that any minister of the Beast, any trafficking priest or accursed hell-marked Jesuit, such as he for whom I am informed search has but lately been made herein, should find his way to this valley, beware that you be not drawn away from the true religion—that you return not like the sow to her wallowing in the mire; for hark me, good people, and give heed. By receiving absolution from such

a one, now that you have once conformed, or, as it is legally phrased, by being "reconciled with the Church of Rome," you would assuredly lose your lives by the hands of the executioner, and your souls, of a certainty, would go down to the pit.' Then referring to those of his parishioners who were absent, he exclaimed: 'I could be angry, and sin not. I could stamp, knock, bend my brow, and threaten. I could take up the execration of David: "Pour out Thy indignation upon them and let Thy wrathful anger take hold of them." Afflict them, O Lord,' he pursued, adding a prayer of his own, 'and consume them in Thy righteousness, for inasmuch as they still cleave to the harlot, and are partakers of her sins, they must needs receive of her plagues.' After more of this sort, the Puritan fanatic went on to dwell at considerable length upon the persecution of 'the saints' in the reign of Queen Mary, and to justify the present penal statutes from the last verse of his text, 'Reward her even as she rewarded you, &c. ;' and by way of peroration uttered the following terrible denunciation: 'Papists (such Papists as adhere to the Pope of Rome) are sure of eternal damnation. I may not speak peace where God speaks no peace. They are but false prophets, Balaam-like, that bless where God doth curse. What peace can I speak to Rome and Romists while their witchcrafts remain amongst them? Saul lost his kingdom for sparing Agag; and God may damn me, for aught I know, if I refuse to damn them. When God preaches damnation to them I may not preach salvation. Antichrist, the Man of Sin, is called the son of perdition; and so he is, actively and passively. He is damned himself, and is the cause of damnation to others. . . . Now you see the danger of being Papists. To be a Papist is to be a traitor to the Queen, a heretic, infidel, atheist, in continual danger of temporal destruction, and at last of eternal damnation.

Ha, why is it,' he inquired, in conclusion, 'that Popery is not already exterminated from amongst us? That the Beast is still suffered to make its foul dens, and to find secret lurking-places in divers parts of our country, but more especially to our shame, in this county of Lancashire? Alas, we are too little vigilant and zealous in the cause of God! Ministers and magistrates alike, we are slothful and lukewarm. Verily, it behoveth us to gird up our loins to the work of the Lord. Erroneous doctrines must perforce be rooted out; yea, even if it be needful, by the slaying of them that hold them; for what saith Luther, the great apostle of these latter days? "There is more merit," he declareth, "in shedding the blood of Papists than in praying." I beseech you, therefore, that are armed with authority,' he added, turning towards Justice Windwood, 'go to the utmost of your authority. You that have power to punish, punish; to indict, indict; to present, present. Let no Papist rest in peace or security. For I warn you that should you keep back the sword from doing justice when God calls for it, you may yourself die by the sword of God, and the blood of all that perish by neglect would rest upon your head. *Crudelitas pro Christi pietas est*,—Cruelty for Christ is godliness.*

Thus ended this amiable effusion, which was followed by a short prayer and valedictory blessing; and with heavy souls the congregation rose to retire, casting, as they departed, mournful glances at the altarless chancel, and making no genuflexion, as had been their wont when an Invisible Presence hallowed the building. Then slowly and sorrowfully they wended their way homewards, each to his own place of abode.

* A large portion of the above sermon is taken *verbatim* from one preached at a date considerably later than that of our story, by Richard Heyrick, Warden of the Manchester Collegiate Church.

CHAPTER XIV.

WALTER WILLOUGHBY AGAIN SEES THE JUSTICE'S DAUGHTER.

PLEASED with the measure of success which had rewarded his efforts to gather a congregation, with his appropriate and eloquent sermon, and the compliments bestowed upon him on its account by Justice Windwood, Sir Paul Cunningham was in high spirits as he sat at dinner with his young wife shortly after the conclusion of the morning service. He strove, however, to restrain all manifestation of the liveliness he felt, and to maintain the severe contemplative air and solemn manner affected by the Puritan zealots of the day; mirth being held by these pretentiously sanctified people to be an abomination, and pleasure, howsoever innocent, a sinful tampering with the spirit of the world and the flesh. For a 'divine' *at any time* to have indulged in merriment or laughter would, in Sir Paul's opinion, have been highly indecorous and wrong; but for one to have done so upon the *Lord's day*, that, both by himself and his co-religionists, would have been regarded as an undoubted giving of place to the Evil One. Concealing, therefore, beneath his ordinary stiff and composed demeanour the satisfaction and self-gratulation he was experiencing, the young minister slowly partook of his food, conversing the while in measured phraseology with his companion. But notwithstanding the attempt to avoid any outward exhibition of it, the wife of his bosom was perfectly cognisant of Sir Paul's inward contentment; and, being proud and fond of him, she

naturally participated in his feelings. The dinner-hour of this couple passed accordingly very pleasantly. But beside their own, there was not, in the whole valley of the Wara, another house wherein the mid-day meal of this Sunday was eaten unseasoned by the sauce of anxiety. By the hearth of each mansion, farmhouse, and cottage in this lately so happy and peaceful district, grim Care had now established himself as a guest whose gloomy and depressing presence there seemed no possibility of ejecting. Over such households among the poorer people as had bravely and uncompromisingly clung to their faith hung the doom of speedy and complete ruin, whilst the same calamity menaced, at no very distant date, even the wealthy families of the glen; for what estate, of any moderate capacity, could long sustain upon it the perpetual drain of the heavy fine for recusancy? In addition, moreover, to this prospective misfortune and to other more pressing personal solitudes, a sword was suspended over Erleston Grange on account of Fr. Christopher's residence within it; death being, as has been before stated, the legal penalty of harbouring or relieving a priest. Those, on the other hand, amongst the inhabitants of our valley, who, in order to escape pecuniary troubles, had consented to violate their principles, found themselves equally far from the enjoyment of peace or happiness. At the cost of approving consciences, they had embarked upon a black and turbid stream, with which, nevertheless, as they had learned from Sir Paul's sermon, they must now continue to sail, or leave it at the hazard of their lives. There was, then, upon this memorable Sunday, when the new creed or its professors gained a first victory in Waradale, plenty of suffering and no lack of occasion for it. Probably, however, the most utterly wretched person in the whole parish on this same day was one whose distress and uneasiness were not immediately referable to any reli-

rious danger or difficulty. This person was Walter Wil-
loughby; and, to account for his unhappy condition, we
must go back a little in our story. Throughout the week
which succeeded his visual introduction to Caroline Wind-
wood, the remembrance of her beauty haunted Walter
with a persistency which somewhat surprised but did not
alarm him; for, regarding the impression it had left upon
him as akin to that which might have been produced by
the sight of some exquisite picture, he made no effort to
obliterate it, and dreamt not of danger in its respect. Nor
did it occur to the young man as either necessary or ad-
visable that he should resist a strong desire which, to-
wards the close of the seven days, seized upon him, to see
the maiden again, and to satisfy himself as to whether or
not he had—as he by that time began to question—formed
an exaggerated idea of her charms. Accordingly, in the
hope that, along with her father, young Mistress Wind-
wood might again attend Sir Paul Cunningham's minis-
trations, he sallied forth about the time for the commence-
ment of service upon the following Sunday morning, and
stationed himself beneath the trees at the foot of the
rugged pathway leading up to St. Michael's Church. He
had waited there but a few seconds before a clatter of
horses' hoofs attested the approach of a party of eques-
trians, and, bending forward, he perceived with satisfac-
tion that it consisted of the justice and his daughter,
closely followed by a couple of men-servants. Drawing
back as they advanced, in obedience to an impulse of
bashfulness, he retreated under cover of the wood,
and from thence watched Caroline as she alighted from
her horse, and afterwards stood for several minutes full
within his view caressing the animal's head. Encouraged
by the knowledge that he was doing so unobserved, the
young man now studied her face and figure with minute-
ness and attention, for which the former occasion of seeing

her had not afforded him opportunity; and, as a result, he acknowledged to himself that, far from exaggerating, he had greatly underrated her loveliness. And, indeed, dressed as she was in attire which displayed all the grace of her proportions, wearing a hat with drooping blue feathers, which became her to perfection, and having the natural bloom of her magnificent complexion heightened by exercise, Caroline Windwood presented a vision sufficiently entrancing to disturb the equanimity of any man not altogether insensible to the influence of physical fascinations. Walter Willoughby was by no means insensible to such influence, and, as he gazed upon the fair damsel, the beauty of her person spellbound and enraptured him. He felt the power of it stealing through his eyes into his very soul, and firing it with a strange hitherto-unknown delight and excitement, which caused him absolutely to tremble. A deep sigh broke from his lips, as, yielding her horse's bridle to a servant, she presently averted her face, and when taking her father's extended hand she proceeded to move away he involuntarily started forward to keep her in view. A slight sound of rustling vegetation, consequent upon the motion, attracting her attention, Caroline turned quickly towards the direction from which it emanated, and before Walter had time to slip behind a tree she had both seen and recognised him, although of the latter fact the young man was not aware.

Acute and vain enough to guess correctly at the object of his presence in this spot, Mistress Windwood felt flattered and pleased, rather than annoyed, by the attention; and when, upon her way homeward from church, she again received a tribute of marked admiration from Walter's eyes as she passed him standing beneath the porch of Abel Hardinge's cottage, she repaid it by a blush and a glance, which, though not unmaidenly, was so kind as to set the recipient's heart in a flutter.

A week of feverish restlessness intervened, and then twice again, impelled by feelings of the nature of which he was still but imperfectly conscious, Walter Willoughby sought Caroline Windwood's presence, and offered at the shrine of her loveliness his silent but ardent worship. On the last of these occasions the young lady, who, as upon the previous Sunday, was on horseback (the yellow carriage being employed in conveying Mrs. Windwood to the parish church of Orrleigh, which her husband, desirous of distributing the family favours, had commanded her to attend), overtook him, with her companions, a little beyond the hamlet, and riding slowly past, dropped, either by accident or design, her glove at his feet.

In eager haste, Walter stooped to pick the treasure from the ground, and scarcely waiting until its late owner had disappeared from sight, he raised it to his lips and covered it with passionate kisses. The action, vehement as it was, and accompanied by strong agitation, awoke him to a true sense of his condition; and hastily clambering to a hill-top, he cast himself upon the grassy turf, to ponder in solitude the new facts and queries of his life. He was in love—at least so he told himself—and in the light of the burning flash which had revealed this to him, the young man saw that the tempestuous passion which he dignified by this hallowed name had swept like a rushing spring-tide into every crevice of his heart, submerging beneath its overmastering waves all feebler affections. Not a syllable had he exchanged with Caroline Windwood; not the slightest acquaintance did he possess with the mind or soul which inhabited that fair temple; yet he was conscious that she had become to him more than all the world beside. To exist without seeing her again would, he felt, be misery; whilst for ever to feast his eyes upon her beauty would, he thought, be a pleasure that could produce no satiety. Every portion of his being ached to

be near her, and as he now lay upon the ground, crushing in his hand that embroidered and scented little glove, passion lashed him with its fury until he became well-nigh distracted. And this absorbing emotion, this witchery, enchantment, *possession*, he called *love*! Would to God such love were less common or altogether unknown! The world then would be centuries nearer its final redemption. But whatever was the nature of his love, Walter Wiloughby had now to confront the fact of its existence. He had also to face certain obstacles which opposed themselves to its indulgence—obstacles so stupendous that, as he assured himself with sickening despair, they could never be overcome. How great, in the first place, was the impediment which stood in the way of his obtaining any speech with the daughter of Justice Windwood; and how preposterous, in the second, would be the hope that, even if he had the opportunity of seeking, and could actually gain, Caroline's love, any connection between her and himself would be permitted by her father! As the utter hopelessness of his case pressed itself upon his conviction, Walter stretched himself face downward upon the daisy-strewn grass of the hill's summit, and broke its still solitude with a moan of pain. The sound was repeated again and again at shortened intervals, becoming in the end almost continuous. But at length it suddenly ceased, and for more than an hour afterwards Walter lay perfectly quiet, and motionless as a corpse. At the close of that time he arose, and thrusting the glove into his doublet, turned homewards. He looked pale and worn. His face was marked by intense suffering, but there was an expression of resolution about the tightly-closed lips. In the hour which had just elapsed he had passed through a conflict, and he had, he believed, gained a victory. A terrible temptation had assailed him, for all at once there had been presented before his mind a method by which he

might hope to win the approbation and good-will of Master Anthony Windwood, and so secure a possibility of arriving at what must henceforth he felt be the one goal of his desires. Selfish, however, as he was by nature, and unblessed by high or strong principle, Walter could not contemplate without horror the idea which had occurred to him; and regarding it as a suggestion of the devil, he wrestled with, and overcame it, returning to Hall-i'-th'-Wood with a fixed determination never again to set eyes upon his enchantress. This resolution lasted in full force throughout the week, during which his loss of appetite, pallor, and extreme irritability were the occasion of much wonderment and uneasiness to Walter's mother and the rest of the household. But upon the ensuing Sunday it nearly gave way beneath the allurements of opportunity, and several times the unhappy young man was upon the point of breaking the vow he had made to himself. Twice, even, he walked as far as the avenue gate on his way to snatch, if possible, one more farewell glance at the beautiful girl whose glove reposed, with all the power of a sorceress's charm, close above his heart. When the long miserable day closed, however, Walter was able to congratulate himself that he had not repeated conduct, which, foolish before, would now, as his common sense acknowledged, have been madness.

CHAPTER XV.

AN INTERVIEW IN THE ORCHARD.

LOCKING his secret within his own breast, seeking no confidant in his misery, and having no recourse to the helps and consolations of religion, Walter Willoughby found his passion increased rather than otherwise by the ineffectual means which he took to stem its course. Literally, as well as figuratively, the young man fell sick of love; continuous pain and perturbation of mind having engendered sympathetic physical debility. For many days after the Sunday upon which he had suffered so severely from the internal conflict between inclination and duty, folly and wisdom, Walter did not stir out of doors; and to avoid the solicitous, but to him annoying, inquiries of friends as to what ailed him, kept principally within the sanctum of his own room. One afternoon, however, towards the close of the following week, attracted probably by the beauty of the day, he wandered into the garden, and betaking himself to a retired corner, paced to and fro upon the narrow shady walk. Above him hung a sky, cloudless and serene, blue with an Italian brilliancy: warm sun-rays pierced through the overhanging trees, mottling the yellow-sanded path with bright golden patches; sweet flower-scents perfumed the air, and birds carolled joyously in the neighbouring wood. Affected, either by the combination of influences agreeable to the senses, or by some interior cause, Walter's face gradually lost its look of depression. His step became more and more elastic; and before he had taken very many

turns he walked briskly to the back of the house, entered a stable, and ordered a groom whom he found there to saddle his horse. The man obeyed with alacrity, remarking that exercise would do both the animal and its master good; and in a few moments young Willoughby, mounted upon a magnificent gray hunter—a present, some six months ago, from his stepfather—was riding down the Hall-i'-th'-Wood avenue. On reaching the entrance to the glen he paused, as though in indecision which direction to take, biting the lash of his riding-whip reflectively. Then muttering to himself, 'I will, I will! S'death! there can be no harm *in that*, at any rate,' he turned to the left, and was soon spurring at full speed past the hamlet of Wolfesford. Not once did he slacken pace until, after a gallop of nearly four miles, he came within view of Ridgwood Manor. Tightening the reins then, he brought his horse to a walking pace, and slowly approached the mansion, his blood quickening at mere sight of the place where dwelt the object of his passionate devotion. A tall holly hedge, as the reader has already been informed, encompassed the Manor grounds; and drawing up at the corner he first reached, Walter peered over it with eyes whose eager gaze seemed striving to pierce through the massive walls into the interior of the house. A large, roomy, comfortable-looking house it was, with its broad mullioned windows of the ground-floor, and irregular antique casements of the upper story, set, most of them, in frames of the dense ivy which overspread a large portion of the building, mounting even to the low balustrade surrounding its roof. Between the house and its observer lay a garden, well tended, but displaying no trim ribbon-borderings, no artistic mosaic-like circles or squares of variegated bedding-out plants, such as are the pride of modern horticulturists. The long white beds were filled with a luxuriant profusion of lilies, roses, carnations, and other familiar old-world flowers, so infinitely

more charming to a true lover of Nature than all the fine, gaudy-coloured, but scentless denizens of present-day garden-plots. The only objects which presented marks of artificial cultivation in Justice Windwood's grounds were the curious green figures adorning the close-cut lawn ; and both house and garden would have furnished studies delightful to the poet or painter. Though neither one nor other of these, Walter Willoughby seemed unable to tear himself from the spot. But at length, with a long-drawn sigh and heavy aspect, he stooped to gather up his reins, and was just upon the point of riding off, when a strain of music smote upon his ear, arresting the movement. It was the low twanging of a lute ; and after a short prelude a voice rose in accompaniment of the instrument. The voice was young and sweet, and though rendered indistinct by distance, Walter instinctively recognised it as that of Caroline. In an instant his whole soul and senses focused themselves in the faculty of hearing ; and he made out presently that the delicious sounds proceeded from an orchard, distant some eighty yards from the place where he sat, projecting beyond the garden, and separated from the road by a field of rough coarse grass. Trembling with excitement he dismounted, and leading his horse over a low mound of grass-covered earth, he attached it to a tree by the bridle, and hurried across the narrow stretch of waste ground. At the sound of her voice, at the thought that she was so near, all vestige of prudence had vanished, and an uncontrollable impulse had laid hold of Walter to look once more upon Caroline, and if possible, speak with her. He had an excuse for doing so, as he remembered, with a mixture of satisfaction and dismay, whilst crossing the field, for he might profess to have sought her presence with the intention of returning her glove. But what if she should really claim its restoration ! Walter was by no means convinced that she had not dropped it

accidentally; and as he pressed his hand above its resting-place he told himself that he could never endure to part with his treasure-trove. The orchard, as the young man found upon reaching it, was surrounded by a ditch; and stepping over this at a point sufficiently narrow to admit of his doing so, he proceeded to make his way towards the music, creeping cautiously from tree to tree. The ground rose slightly towards the centre of the enclosure, the fruit-trees becoming less and less dense; and all at once, as he neared a comparatively open space, the trespasser dropped upon his knees. In that position he remained, crouching behind a bush, and endeavouring to still the palpitation of his heart, but bending sideways each moment to feed his eager gaze upon the picture before him. And what a picture it was! There in the shadow of an old wall—the remnant of some ruined cottage or summer-house—overgrown with honeysuckle, and surmounted by ruddy dragon's mouth and yellow stone-crop, sat Caroline Windwood, her back resting against an ancient gnarled apple-tree which grew close in front of it. Her exquisite profile, with its short upper lip, straight delicate nose, and symmetrical curves of cheek and chin, was turned towards the enamoured beholder, and Walter noticed with an access of fascination a new beauty in the rounded arm which grasped the lute, and the white little hand whose ringed fingers strayed over its strings. A tawny mastiff lay upon the sward by Caroline's side, his black muzzle resting upon her knee, and his eyes closed as though in enjoyment of the music. How Walter envied the animal! especially when, laying down her instrument, she commenced to pat his head, gazing the while abstractedly before her. Not daring now to move—scarcely even to breathe—the love-lorn youth watched, or rather devoured, the face of his beloved, feeling that her Cytherean presence converted the orchard into a paradise, and vaguely longing that this mid-

summer afternoon might never terminate—that the spell of this enchanting silence might endure for ever. His sentiments changed, however, when he observed presently that Caroline's countenance was assuming by degrees a deeply pensive air; and seized then with a yearning desire to address her, he was beginning to question within himself whether or not he could summon courage to do so, when her own voice broke the stillness with words which caused his whole frame to quiver with delight.

'Heyday, Lion,' he heard her sigh, as she bent over the dog, who still kept his nose on her lap, though regarding her with upturned eyes full of affection, and slowly wagging his tail as she spoke,—'heyday, Lion, but your mistress is a silly wench! To let her thoughts run i' this fashion upon a young man, and a Papist withal! One, too, who, belike, doth not care for her; for, look you, Lion, my dog, 'tis now two Sundays since he hath sought to meet me. And after I had done him so marked a favour beside! But 'tis madness this. Good Heavens, I must rid myself of this folly!' She concluded, with a gesture so impatient that her huge companion rose to his feet, and stared at her with an air of surprise on his canine features. Bidding him lie down again, Caroline then seized her lute, and sang to a lively accompaniment, but with a plaintive tone in her voice, a simple little song, meant to be a lively one:

'What though his eyes be bright,
Maiden, trust him not;
Eyes that seem love alight
Can deceive I wot.

What though his speech be smooth,
Maiden, trust him not;
Lips that do prate of love
Often lie I wot.

What though he vow he's true,
Maiden, trust him not;

Troth, he may swear and sue,
Yet prove false I wot.

Men are deceivers all,
Maiden, trust them not;
Handsome, ugly, short, and tall,
Fickle are I wot.'

As the song came to an end, Walter rose from his place of concealment, his pulses throbbing with a strange wild joy, which brought back the colour to his cheeks and sparkled in his blue eyes. Before he had advanced a couple of steps, however, he paused again in some alarm, for the great mastiff, with ears erect and bristling mane, was cringing *ventre à terre*, uttering a loud growl, and evidently preparing for a spring.

'Down, Lion! peace, sir!' cried Caroline, perceiving the danger of her visitor, whom she had instantly recognised. And stooping—for she, too, had risen to her feet—she laid hold of the dog's collar, and continued to soothe him during several moments. There was no necessity for this action, the animal having at her first word of command abandoned all demonstration of wrath; but Caroline, glad of a pretext for doing so, was striving to conceal her face, suffused with a flush of pleasure, and to control all outward show of her inward gratification. In this she succeeded so well, that when, shortly, Walter again ventured to approach towards her, she drew herself erect, and regarded him with a stern and dignified air whilst he stammered forth an apology.

'Pardon me, gentle lady, that I have thus thrust myself into your presence,' he began, in the sweet melodious voice which was his most attractive characteristic. 'Forgive this intrusion, I pray you—'

'I' faith, sir, you may well call it an *intrusion*,' interrupted Caroline. 'You have invaded my privacy, sir;

you are trespassing. May I ask your excuse for such ill-bred behaviour?’

‘Nay, sweet mistress, I have no excuse,’ returned Walter, in trembling accents, ‘other than hath the metal for flying to the lodestone, the insect for rejoicing in the sunbeams, the eye for delighting in beauty, the ear in sweetness, the heart in love!’

‘Marry, gentle youth, but you have a glib tongue,’ remarked Caroline, retaining with difficulty her look of displeasure. ‘I can scarce, however, account this fine speech as sufficient explanation of your extraordinary conduct, and if you have none further to offer I must beg of you to withdraw.’

‘Ah, send me not away yet, beseech you, dearest lady,’ cried Walter, emboldened by a remembrance of the words he had overheard. ‘An you did but know how my heart hath been craving this fortnight past for one glance of your eye, one look at your face, you would, perchance, have pity on me.’ And the young man drew a step nearer.

‘S’ddeath, sirrah, you are over-bold,’ exclaimed Caroline, retreating a little as he advanced. ‘My father would be mightily displeased were he to find you here. Prithee begone without delay, or I must myself leave you,’ she added, bending to take her lute from the ground.

‘Nay, madam, an you insist upon it, I will go,’ replied Walter, his tone and eyes full of winning entreaty. ‘Yet permit me still to tarry an instant—for see, I have somewhat to show you;’ and he drew forth the glove. ‘Is not this your property?’

‘Let me see—why, ’tis my glove!’ returned Caroline, blushing crimson, but striving to hide her embarrassment—‘I must have dropped it on my way from church. Where found you it, sir?’ And the little coquette stretched out her hand to receive it.

Walter allowed her to touch the glove, but did not

relinquish his own hold, and their hands came into contact, sending a thrill of rapture through the young man's veins.

'O, do not take it from me, sweet Mistress Windwood,' he pleaded, sinking now upon his knees, and looking up into her face with such passionate admiration as caused Caroline to avert her beautiful violet eyes, and to blush more deeply than before. O, do not rob me of it,' he continued. 'In truth I cannot give it up.'

Caroline withdrew her hand, and Walter instantly raised the glove to his lips.

'Nay, keep it then,' she said, 'as you value it so highly. But methinks, young gentleman,' she added, smiling, 'that you are well used to playing the courtier.'

'Not so, fairest and sweetest of earth's creatures,' he exclaimed, clasping his hands with an earnest gesture. 'Ah, believe me, 'tis the first time I have knelt to a damsel. 'Tis the first time I have dreamt of love. But, O, how my heart now acheth with the agony and sweetness of it!' And creeping closer, Walter stooped and kissed the hem of her dress, pursuing, with an abandonment of passion, 'O, would I were that dog, that I might follow you constantly! Would I were your shadow, that I might be near you! Would I were the ring upon your finger or the bracelet upon your arm, that I might but clasp or touch you!'

Almost frightened by the vehemence of his words and manner, Caroline moved farther away from her lover; but she did not again repeat the command that he would leave her; and when at her request he had risen from the ground, she stood leaning against the old apple-tree, the long lashes veiling her downcast eyes, as she softly stroked Lion's head, and listened to the outpouring of Walter's excited feelings. How eloquent he was! And how sweet did his low but eager tones sound in her ears, as the

young man told the story of his love! Such love as he was alone capable of—absorbing, sensual, selfish, but such also as his listener was best able to comprehend. All consideration of the folly he was committing in thus declaring his passion for the daughter of Anthony Windwood, the enemy of his faith and the murderer of his friend—the coarse-natured, stony-hearted priest-hunter—was now cast to the winds. All respect for religion, all thought of friends, all care of future consequences, were for the time being forgotten.

Intoxicated by her presence, oblivious of aught beyond the bliss of the present moment, of the rapture of seeing that his admiration was not unacceptable to Caroline, Walter recounted to her, in the exaggerated language of passion, the history of his sentiments during the past few weeks, dwelling upon the impressions first produced upon him by her beauty, upon the progress of his enslavement to her charms, his subsequent discovery of the state of his feeling, and his late wretchedness, consequent upon the struggle to overcome it. For her part, Caroline Windwood hearkened, as we have admitted, with pleasure, to the fervid tale of her companion. It was by no means the only one of the kind she had heard, for, though so young, she was well used to adulation and flattery, but it was, sooth to say, the first which awoke within her own breast the thrill of responsive emotion.

Her fancy, caught in the first instance by Walter's handsome exterior, had become further cemented each time she had been the recipient of his tribute of silent devotion, offered as it had been in places and under circumstances of romance. Obstinate, too, and self-willed as she was by nature, young Mistress Windwood had found an additional charm in Walter's admiration and passion from the fact that it could only be given or accepted under difficulties.

The 'course' of this love, whether true or not, was not likely to 'run smooth.' But the obstacles which threatened to impede its flow were just what contributed for this spoiled child—this physically lovely, but not high-souled girl—its chief attractiveness. Then, again, Walter's temporary abandonment of the pursuit had, whilst it annoyed and enraged her, only served to add fuel to the flame of her own incipient passion; and of late she, too, had suffered mentally. Very sweet, therefore, to Caroline Windwood were the stolen waters of this interview; although, with the pride and reticence of feeling natural to all young women when not thoroughly debased, she concealed from her companion, in so far as she was able, the gratification it afforded her. Before a parting took place between them, however, she had given her lover her Christian name in return for his own, and Walter had also contrived to draw from her an acknowledgment that this orchard was her favourite haunt, and that upon fine days she usually spent the afternoon here, reading or practising upon her lute, beneath the shadow of the ruined wall.

'But you must not come hither again, Master Willoughby,' she added. 'An you do, I shall not speak to you. Remember, sir, you are a Papist.'

'A Papist!' repeated Walter, recoiling slightly and turning pale, as a rush of thoughts suggested by the words passed through his brain; but drawing closer upon the following instant as he murmured, 'Nay, sweet Caroline, call me not by that nickname, I beseech you. I am, 'tis true, a Catholic; but since I have spoken with you this afternoon, Caroline, I have learned that you are dearer to me than my faith, dearer than my conscience, dearer than my own soul. For one touch of that soft hand I would risk my life. For the hope of winning you for my wife I would hazard the loss o' heaven.'

Whether or not Caroline Windwood considered herself

worthy of such tremendous sacrifices upon the part of her lover, she was certainly not displeased with him for the profession of his willingness to make them, and when, some time afterwards, he bade her a reluctant adieu, she yielded him her hand, and permitted him to touch it with his lips. As he turned, however, for a last lingering look, on taking his final departure, she repeated the injunction she had already given him, that he should not again visit her in the orchard. Did she mean it to be obeyed? Walter thought not. And springing to his saddle, he galloped home a changed man—happy, and resolved to remain so—resolved no longer to fight against his fate; to eschew for the future any such vows as had led to his late misery. Was that happiness genuine? Was the sweet morsel ~~he~~ now rolled beneath his tongue sweet throughout, or was there bitterness in its centre to be perceived upon swallow~~ing~~ ing it?

CHAPTER XVI.

A WRECKED MIND.

FOR several days succeeding that upon which Lady Anderson had received the shock followed by such direful effects, her power of body and brain raged together with supreme violence. Like a rudderless vessel, driven hither and thither at the mercy of a fierce storm, the mind of the helpless lady tossed about in a wild sea of delirium. Over her troubled waters of her distracted intellect brooded a heavy darkness, broken only by flashes of lurid fitful light, whereby were conjured up images and scenes in which truth was strangely commingled with the vagaries of an excited imagination. Of these miserable fancies, Henry was always the centre object—always in situations of peril, generally in the hands of murderers; whilst she, held back by cruel cords, was unable to assist or rescue him. The scenery and *dramatis personæ*—the place, method, and perpetrators of the murder—changed constantly; but the subject of the terrible drama, ceaselessly enacted during this epoch of the mental malady in Lady Anderton's diseased cerebrum, remained unvaried. The calamity which had overthrown her mind loomed an ever-present horror, her dead son constituting amidst the shifting phantasmagoria of her disorganised brain the one stable figure; and the agony occasioned by his presence in that weird phantom-land was none the less acute and real on account of its being the product of hallucination. Maddening almost was it to listen to the wild ravings of

her madness, to witness the struggles to break the bonds by which she had been confined to her couch, and to hear the furious and despairing shrieks which accompanied each failure of the effort.

Noting the exasperating effects of restraint, Father Christopher urged continually that the poor patient's cords should be loosed; but fearing that in her paroxysms of frenzy she might, were she free, do a mischief to herself or others, the afflicted friends hesitated for some time to comply with his recommendation. In making it, however, the good priest manifested sound common sense, and common sense three centuries ago was the most reliable physician for the insane. Then, and for a long subsequent period, mental disease, as is well known, was a branch of medical science little studied and scarcely at all understood; and dreadful mistakes were committed in consequence of ignorance. Madness, in fact, in those by-past times was very commonly regarded as a kind of demoniacal possession, and not unfrequently was the unfortunate sufferer from curable phrenitis or temporary aberration of mind cast into prison and treated as the worst of criminals. Separated thus as a leper from his kind, left in the sole custody of a brutal or ignorant guardian, cut off from each familiar face, each familiar thing, which by touching some mystic cord might have helped back the bewildered mind to sense and memory, no wonder if horror and amazement at his condition speedily extinguished the poor wretch's re-awakening reason, and that what might have been under different usage but a passing affection became confirmed into a permanent and hopeless malady. Stories, which are now happily but bugbears of the imagination told to frighten children, of miserable beings forgotten by the world, chained to damp slimy walls in loathsome dungeons—pale creatures etiolating in sempiternal darkness, or fiery-eyed maniacs howling in fury and despair, to the

accompaniment of clanging fetters, as, like wild beasts, they run from side to side of their cells, would, in the days of which we write, have found melancholy counterparts in reality. Most gaols throughout the country had their madmen; and the treatment of these unfortunates was such, that had it not been practised for the most part in the good faith of ignorance, it might truly have been termed diabolical. In Lady Anderton's case, however, thanks to him who for the love of God had been received as an honoured guest at Erleston Grange, a system was pursued very different from that in vogue at the period in the management of the insane. In compliance with Father Christopher's reiterated suggestion, the poor lady was at length set free from the restraint which had had so exacerbating and inflaming an influence upon her disease; and whilst close at hand waited those who, in the event of any dangerous violence, would be able to master her, she was encouraged to believe herself in full possession of liberty. That the course was a wise one was soon proved. Soothed by the removal of restraint, a change presently occurred in the nature of the sufferer's delusions. Those horrible tormenting visions of Henry in the agonies of death, or struggling in the grasp of bloodthirsty monsters, which through long sleepless days and nights the demon of insanity had been casting with unwearied persistency, like the pictures of a magic lantern, athwart the darkened chamber of her mind, vanished; and with them the turbulence and desperation of her mood. A new set of shadows began to chase each other through her unresting mind, fresh threads wove themselves into her tangled waking dreams, and by degrees, together with a deadness to all outward perception, there settled over the enfeebled mind a complete blankness as to every recent event of life. Late years, with their interests and occurrences, became as though they had never been, whilst with sin-

gular clearness memory recalled the scenes of bygone days. A child again, she babbled childish nonsense by the knee of a long-buried mother, or wandered with little companions in the favourite out-door haunts of childish years. A young girl, she lived anew in the sweet springtime of early love and courtship, remembering with wonderful accuracy looks and speeches which had faded from the tablets of her recollection, until, like the writing of invisible ink exposed to fire, they now flashed forth in the fever-heated 'sepulchre of the panting soul.' But not only was the dreamland in which Lady Anderton now lived, peopled with the phantoms of memory, it was alive also with creatures of her imagination. Not only did she meet again and hold converse with those whom she had known and loved in former days, but she saw also, with equal distinctness, people who had never lived, and repeated conversations which had never occurred—wild rambling talks full of broken thoughts and unfinished expressions. Scenes in which she had actually taken part, places which she had really seen, mingled heterogeneously in her brain's chaos with those which had no existence outside her own distracted fancy. Reason had loosed her guiding-reins, and through a strange region of shadows and spirits, a vast cloudland of vivid unrealities, memory and invention rode a-tilt. Sometimes the landscape through which these wandering faculties hurried so unrestingly was bleak and wintry, or grim and horrible; but for the most part, imagination pictured pleasant things, and that visionary world was brighter than the workaday world, as dream adventures are sweeter than waking experiences. Along with the happier fancies which characterised this stage of her disorder, the invalid recovered power to eat and sleep; and as a consequence, her elastic constitution rallied again. The fevered pulse abated, the blood ran with healthy regularity through her veins, and the flushed

cheek resumed its natural colour; but with the restoration to physical health came another change in her mental condition. Over the hitherto active brain stole a deep stupefaction; the tempest-driven wreck floated motionless, the race of unbridled thoughts and conceptions came to an end, the fire burnt down, and nothing appeared to be left of that once fine intellect but ashes.

With aching agonised hearts, the loving relatives watched through this interval of absolute nullity, of dull blank apathy—watched and waited and prayed, growing daily more hopeless that the lamp of reason would ever be rekindled. At length, however, when some weeks had glided by, a faint motion became perceptible amidst the ashes, and slowly the buried senses awoke to a kind of sluggish life, stretching forth feeble hands towards the light of day.

Disjointed thoughts and ideas began to shape themselves in the hazy atmosphere of the paralysed brain, and by degrees a frail tremulous bridge was thrown across the black gulf of total imbecility. Reason and perception returned, in so far as to lift partially the heavy curtain from before the dulled internal eyes, and Lady Anderton saw ‘men as trees walking.’ She appeared now, especially in the mornings after a night of sound sleep, to recognise the room in which she lay, and the faces of those who surrounded her; and one day, some two months after the fatal stroke which had laid her weakened faculties prostrate in the dust, she addressed her husband by name.

Filled with an elation proportionate to their former despondency, the inmates of Erleston Grange sanguinely anticipated further improvement, and looked forward in the end to a perfect cure. But in these hopes they were doomed to disappointment. Thus far, and no farther, had been spoken of the wave of progress, and beyond the

point now reached, recovery never went. The shattered over-balanced mind remained a ruin—though not so unsightly a one as might have been—since careful nursing and judicious treatment had prevented the afflicted woman from becoming a raving maniac or dribbling idiot. Still the form which poor Lady Anderton's insanity now eventually assumed, although not so fearful or revolting as those mentioned, was scarcely less hopeless and distressing. From the hour when memory, struggling painfully into renewed being, had enabled her once more to grasp the fact of Henry's decease, she became melancholy mad; and melancholy mad to the end of her days she continued. That her eldest-born was verily dead, her too-fondly loved son gone for ever from her sight, the bereaved mother now well understood; and the gigantic proportions which this truth took in her disorganised mental vision constituted henceforward the idiosyncrasy of her disease. All else than the bare outlines of the events which had led to Henry's death were forgotten by her—the cause of his and her own presence in St. Michael's Church, the name of the man whose brutal violence had led to the catastrophe, and the object of the pursuivants' visit. But the scene wherein her son had wrestled with his enemies, the picture of him lying bleeding upon the altar-steps, were ever present to her remembrance; and amongst her intellectual obliquities the chief was that he had died then and there—the subsequent illness through which she had nursed him, and the manner in which she had learned of his dissolution, having, along with other concurrent circumstances, been completely erased from her recollection. Never again, from the time when her cerebral malady reached its final development, was this second victim of Justice Windwood's cruelty, and of her own inordinate affection, known to smile. Weighed down by a heavy settled depression, she would sit for

hours gazing out from the window of her room, her vacant eyes seeing nothing of the sunny summer landscape. With white fingers interlaced, she would remain thus in the same position, taking no note of the coming in or going out of those who cared for her, motionless but for the incessant turning of her head from side to side, and the quivering of her lips as she muttered to herself words which expressed the one burden of her thoughts: 'Henry is dead! O, my son, my darling, he is dead, dead, dead!'—words which, from constant repetition, came by and by to sound to those who heard them like mechanical meaningless utterances. From this state nothing had power to rouse her. The once lively and active woman—she who, by dint of a strong will combined with superior intelligence, had long ruled the entire household—became now, as it were, a nonentity to its members. Although to all appearance knowing and distinguishing the persons of her family and servants, she could rarely be persuaded to exchange a syllable with any, and by no means could she be induced to take the slightest interest in passing events. Her beauty impaired in a great measure by the absence of intellect, her learning vanished into the air, the mind and body of this proud gifted lady, like those of Nabuchodonozor in the days of his humiliation, were abased to the dust. And the soul—what of that? Ah, was it not in the keeping of Him who guides the universe and numbers the hairs of our head?—Him without whose knowledge nothing happens that does happen, and whose designs, though often inscrutable, are ever just and righteous. So at least thought Father Christopher, the Heaven-sent teacher and comforter of this stricken and sorrowful house.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE SECRET CHAMBER.

It was nearly three months from the day she had left it an expectant bride before Helen Rutherford returned to Hall-i'-th'-Wood. For, notwithstanding her resignation to the sharp trial which had befallen her, she had shrunk from going back to the old life at home; feeling instinctively that, when once again settled there, she should realise, more completely than ever, the blank which Henry's death had made in her existence. And seeing that, in nursing and tending Lady Anderton, their daughter had found an employment which, by drawing her out of herself, was of immense service to her, Helen's parents had not pressed for that return, anxious though they had naturally felt to have the poor girl with them in their trouble. Helen had, accordingly, remained at Erlestone Grange, reaping the reward of her efforts at usefulness, and also deriving much benefit from the companionship of Father Christopher, and the spiritual advice and consolation which that saintly man had been able to afford her. She had, moreover, during her protracted stay in this house—which, had Henry lived, would now have been her rightful home—been privileged daily to be present at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and two or three times in each week to approach the Heavenly Banquet and partake of the Bread of Life, our Lord's last pledge of love—designed by Him to be the sovereign balm for every grief and care of life. Thus sustained and strengthened, Helen's fiery

affliction had proved the means of purifying and enlarging her soul. She had come out from it like gold refined by the furnace, with a character intensified and more evenly balanced—a noble gracious woman instead of a light-hearted girl. The tears which had washed away her bright-hued terrestrial hopes had formed themselves into a chaplet to adorn her brow with the reflection of rainbow-tinted celestial virtues. Self-abnegating submission to a Higher Will had developed in her countenance a serenity and repose, a certain sweet stateliness of womanhood, which imparted to it a beauty more spiritual and attractive than that it had in former days possessed.

It was hard for one who had looked on and watched this new beauty dawning and deepening in Helen Rutherford's face—hard, because on its account he had learned to love her the better, whilst daily and hourly he had grown more convinced that such love was hopeless. A yearning tender pity for the suffering girl, mingled with an ardent admiration of the manner in which she bore her pain, had increased in William Anderton's faithful heart the one strong true love of his life. Yet now, quite as fully as when Helen had been on the eve of marriage with his brother, did William feel that his love was bestowed upon one who, neither in kind nor degree, could ever return it. It was not that Helen shunned or treated him with indifference. On the contrary, she showed unvaried kindness and affection. But the affection was of that description which a sister or an angel might have entertained towards him; and the persistent fearless manifestation of it was what had served so effectually to crush the young man's hopes. Most absolutely did William believe in the fulfilment of that prophecy which Helen had made on the evening of his death to him who, in so short a time was to have become her husband, viz. that her heart would be buried in his grave, and that she

would never love another. Bravely, however, he bore up against the distress which this conviction occasioned—struggling to believe that it was well for him that earthly love should be denied, in order that he might have the more room in his heart for that which was heavenly. Rebellion or despair was not for him who had been favoured with a peculiar individual communication from God, who, in one ineffable well-remembered moment, had felt the power and sweetness of Divine consolation. There was, therefore, in this disappointment of freshly-kindled hopes, no renewal of that storm of rage and misery by which, in former days, his mind had been harassed and racked—only a present desolation difficult enough to endure. And out of the cold winter of this desolation, William Anderton found, ere long, a door opened to him into the summer of God's presence. He was kneeling one evening in his own room, crying out, from a heart full of pain and sadness, after that Great Father who fills the unknowable infinite and yet may be recognised as surely as a little child knows its mother, when, as though by a sudden inspiration, an idea flashed across his brain which brought a responsive thrill of awe and delight to his heart. 'O my God, suffer that it should be so!' he exclaimed, praying aloud in his excitement. 'O, help me to leave everything, and to follow Thee! to follow Thee entirely—to follow Thee to death! O, accept, sweet Jesus, the sacrifice of my love, my life, my all! Let me be Thy disciple, Thy servant—all unworthy though I be of so great an honour.'

The wish embodied in this petition proved to be no mere passing effusion of enthusiastic feeling. It returned again and again, growing stronger and deeper with each recurrence. It was not, however, until William felt perfectly assured of his vocation—until his ardent desire had become confirmed into a settled purpose to enter the

priesthood—that he mentioned the subject to any person. And when the full development of this resolution took place, he was not at home. He was in London, for which city he had departed a few days prior to Helen Rutherford's return to her father's home.

The object of his visit to the metropolis may be guessed. Distracted by recent exciting events, Sir John had forgotten, or at least neglected to take measures for, the proper appropriation of the trust money left in his charge. But when anxiety upon his wife's account had given place to hopeless sorrow, and other cares had ceased to press for immediate attention, his solicitude upon this score had returned. And, fortunately, he had then been in a position, through Father Christopher's presence in his house, to learn the name and address of the superior of the Jesuits, to whom, as the reader will recollect, he had resolved, at Squire Rutherford's recommendation, to commit his brother's bequest, but of which, on the evening when that recommendation was made, he had been in ignorance. The second difficulty, too, which, upon the evening in question, had presented itself—that as to who should convey the money to its new trustee—had now also found a solution; for directly upon learning his father's design, William had eagerly offered himself as the messenger. The mission being one of extreme danger, there had been considerable hesitation upon the part of the Baronet in accepting his son's services; but at length, on William's giving a promise to exercise the utmost precaution in his association with those who, in the eye of the law, were proscripts and felons, he had yielded a somewhat reluctant consent, and William had accordingly set off at once on what was then the long and tedious journey to London.

The absence of the amiable young man was felt by every member of the household, but probably by no one

was he more missed than by Father Christopher, to whom he had of late been a constant and devoted companion.

Besides Sir John and Kate, William was the only inmate of the Grange who knew where the good Father had been concealed upon his arrival there, or who was aware of the fact that each night he slept in the same secure hiding-place. For more than eighty years previous to this time the vault had not been opened, and, as it happened, none of the servants was even aware of its existence. Prudent and cautious almost to a fault, Sir John insisted that the secret should be kept within the knowledge of his own family, although at the same time he both felt and acknowledged that he had not the slightest reason to distrust any of his dependents. A great aid in the preservation of the secret was supplied by the fact that the Baronet had caused a second place of concealment to be made, with the position and construction of which all in the house were familiar. This additional hiding-place opened from William's bedroom, and, like the majority of those which, in these troublous times, were formed in almost all Catholic houses of any size, it lay between the massive double walls of that and an adjoining chamber. Entrance to it was afforded by the sliding aside of a portion of the panelling, so arranged as to answer to the touch of a spring, and from one corner of the tiny apartment a flight of roughly-hewn steps conducted downwards. At the foot of these was another door, moved also by a concealed spring, and covered upon the other side by hangings of tapestry. This door opened into the chapel, situated immediately beneath William's room, and it was by means of the narrow clumsy staircase that the Jesuit descended to his nightly lodgment in the vault. Being, however, seen to retire there habitually, it was generally supposed that he shared William's chamber; and the hypothesis which the domestics had formed

concerning the communication with the chapel was, that it had been planned on account of the facility with which the house might thence be quitted, for just outside it was a side entrance.

Sir John Anderton's reason for desiring that his guest should occupy so wretched a bedchamber, and for the latter's ready acquiescence in the arrangement, was that the favourite hour for a visit of pursuivants to any suspected Catholic house was the dead of night, at which time it was naturally supposed that the inhabitants would be off their guard. So far as the Baronet knew, his house was not at present suspected; but there was, of course, a possibility that an inkling might at any time arise in the minds of the authorities that the hunted priest, who had so mysteriously disappeared from the neighbourhood, might, notwithstanding the examination, be concealed therein. The consequences of discovery being so serious, as well for himself and family as for the escaped prisoner, Sir John very rightly considered discretion, in this case, to be better than valour. The utmost precaution was accordingly taken to guard against surprise, the approaches of the house being watched throughout the daytime, and the doors at all times kept carefully secured.

Excepting for the purpose of administering the sacraments to the sick and dying, Father Christopher never left the mansion; and when called upon to do so by this duty, he wore a disguise, and paid his visits under cover of darkness, William (when at home) being always, upon such occasions, his guide and attendant. Care, too, was taken that the assembling of people for Mass upon Sundays and holidays should not lead to detection; and in order to prevent this, it was said early in the morning—often, indeed, very shortly after midnight.

Attended thus in secrecy, and at the risk of severe punishment, the august, holy, all-efficient worship of the

persecuted Church became, to those who frequented it, infinitely more precious than before. With what deep solemnity, what fervour of devotion, what ardent gratitude, did the poor Catholics of Waradale gather round the altar of Erleston Grange, whilst the new incumbent of St. Michael's Church was fast asleep in his bed, to witness the offering up of that adorable Sacrifice, which, in spite of the rage it excites in the breast of Satan and his followers, shall, to the end of time, be presented to God, 'from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof'!

CHAPTER XVIII.

A LETTER—IN DURANCE AT RIDGWOOD MANOR.

OUR readers will, we hope, have taken sufficient interest in the two priests, to whom they were introduced in the earlier part of this narrative, to render it unnecessary for us to apologise for here interrupting the thread of our story in order to transcribe a letter by which information may be acquired concerning their fate. This letter, which was written by Master Rupert Ashworth, bore the address, 'Sir J. Anderton, of Erleston Grange, and all other my dear friends in Waradale.' It was dated from the Fleet Prison in Manchester, and reached its destination towards the close of August in the year of which we have so far been writing. The letter was of considerable length, having occupied its author several days in the penning. Modernising the spelling, however, and to some extent the language, we will venture to give it in full. It ran as follows :

'Beloved friends, I send you herewith my most hearty commendations. By dint of constant and persevering petitioning for the same, I have at length obtained from Master Worsley, the keeper of this prison, permission to purchase writing materials, wherewith I now commence a task which will, I trow, give me both joy and grief in the execution.

'This task, my dear friends, is to give you, as briefly as may be, consonant with fulness, a history of all that

hath befallen your holy and revered pastor, Father Maitland, and myself, his most unworthy comrade, since that day when we were torn from you by force.

‘In the pursuance of my purpose, I will begin at the beginning, and go straightforward with this my story, though so full is my heart and mind of that which must come at its close, that I would fain commence where my letter shall end. Nathless, I pray you not to look to that end until you shall come thereto; for by reading that which goeth before, you will, I wot, be the better prepared for what followeth after. So, without more words, I address myself to my labour.

‘On the evening of the day whereupon we were taken captives, the good Father and myself, as perchance you already know, were carried to the house of Justice Windwood, where also we were lodged for a full week afterwards. Upon arriving thereat, we were straightway led up the stairs to a part of the house which appeared to be but little used, and there thrust into a chamber which stood at the end of a long passage. The chamber at our entrance was devoid of all furniture; but at the command of his honour the Justice, there were brought into it a couple of stools, and likewise some straw, which, being laid upon the floor in a corner, was designed to serve us as bed.

‘Our hands and feet were then bound separately with strong hempen cords, and we were left alone, the door being locked on the outside. No food was brought to us that night, neither were we provided with a light nor any coverlet for the bed. Yet, notwithstanding these present inconveniences, and the danger and uncertainty of our future lot, my companion manifested by his talk that he was in the enjoyment of a cheerful mind. But I, for my part, was far otherwise than happy; for not only was I tormented with dread of that which lay before me, but I

was filled also with uneasiness on account of that which lay behind; for had I not this day spoken falsely? like St. Peter, denying my Lord through cowardice! Presently, however, I bethought me to make sacramental confession of my fault, to the end that I might obtain forgiveness thereof; and being greatly comforted by this act, I knelt down by the side of my ghostly father, whilst we repeated, as well as we could from memory, the daily office, and said our private prayers, after which we lay down together upon the straw. In a few moments my aged companion was soundly asleep, but I lay awake for the most part of the night, the rope which fastened my wrists being so tight that it did greatly gall and fret me. In the morning we were served betimes with a breakfast of coarse bread and water, and shortly afterwards we received a visit from the Sheriff and Justice; when the former gentleman, seeing that my hands had become much swollen, very civilly loosened the cords.

‘Master Windwood, howbeit, seemed but ill-pleased by the courtesy of his fellow, and muttered something about my having, ere long, a rope about my neck, which would give me some reason to howl, and make me think little of suchlike trifling pain as that I was then enduring. Moreover, when the Sheriff, by and by, left the room, he lingered a while behind, and called us both by many foul names, the which it were of little use to repeat.

‘We had been locked up again but a short space before we heard in the distance a great shouting and tramping of men, followed by the banging-to of a door; and from the stillness which thereafter fell upon the house, we gathered that the pursuivants had departed to renew the search for that escaped prisoner whom they had yester-e’en failed to find; and most fervently did we pray that if any poor brother were really concealed in the valley, our good God would keep him safe from the cruel bloodhounds

of the law, and preserve him to your edification and strengthening in the faith.

'About noon the serving-man who had brought us our breakfast entered our apartment, and rudely thrust beneath our noses a platter of broken meat, which appeared to be the leavings of a table, peradventure that of the servants, all mingled up together.

'The sight of this disgusting mess roused my easily-kindled ire, and I angrily asked the fellow if he "took us for swine, that he brought us such swinish food." "I take you for Popish dogs, which you are," replied the man, giving me a kick, which my bonds, rather, I fear, than my sacred character, hindered me from revenging. "And dogs must be fed as dogs; so my master hath rightly ordered you this food." "Ay, truly, like master, like man," I cried; and should doubtless have spoken other wrathful words had not my companion interrupted me. "My dear son," he said gently, "'twas our Blessed Lord Himself who sent us this food, e'en if the devil brought it; let us not refuse His gifts." And with a sweet smile upon his face, the holy man selected some morsels with his fettered hands and quietly ate them. A want of proper humility, however, prevented me from following this his saintly example; and when he had finished his meal, the platter was removed without my having tasted aught therefrom. Had it not been for a circumstance which I am about to record, this act of rebellion would have cost me dear; for upon hearing thereof on his return, Justice Windwood commanded that I should be kept without food throughout all the following day, swearing that ere he had done with me, he would make me right thankful to eat whatsoever was set before me. The circumstance to which I refer is as follows:

'We were both lying awake in the dead of this second night; I suffering from the pangs of hunger, and my

comrade kept from sleeping, it may be, by my restlessness (though he made no complaint thereof), when of a sudden, albeit we had heard no footsteps coming down the passage, a key was softly placed in the lock and the bolt gently turned backwards in the socket.

‘Greatly astonished were we by this, and the more so, as you may well conceive, when we saw a lady enter, bearing in her hand a light, and enwrapped in a long cloak, beneath the which, as I presently perceived, she was but partially dressed. Setting down the candle upon one of the stools, she timidly approached us, trembling from head to foot; and taking from under her cloak a basket, she drew therefrom a bottle of wine and some good wholesome meats, and pressed us to partake without delay of the latter, and to hide what was left of the former below the straw for our future use. The face of the lady was very pale and of a melancholy aspect, and she seemed much afraid of being found with us, and in great haste to be gone again. Howbeit, in answer to the good father’s queries, we learned from her upon this occasion that she was the wife of the Justice Windwood, and that she had taken the key of our chamber from beneath his pillow as he slept, which he did very soundly, it being his custom every night to retire to bed heavy with drink.

‘From this time forth, until the day of our departure from Ridgwood Manor, we were favoured about the same hour of every night with a visit from that kind benefactress, whom to the end of my life I shall remember in my prayers and with a grateful heart.

‘Never came she to us empty handed, for having learned in how shameful a manner we were treated as did regard our food, she had ever her basket of excellent wine and well-cooked provisions.

‘And truly, but for this obliging attention, my aged brother must have grown weak for lack of proper nourish-

ment in that house of plenty; whilst I, who, by reason of a hasty reply I had returned to one of his rough speeches (for suffering hath been slow in teaching me the virtue of holy patience), had drawn to myself the special enmity of our captor, had liked to have famished utterly.

‘Finding that her good deeds did remain undiscovered and unsuspected, Madam Windwood plucked up courage, and each midnight tarried with us somewhat longer than on the foregoing one.

‘Night by night, likewise, she grew to hold franker converse with Father Maitland, whose sweet and winning deportment did appear greatly to charm her; and, for all that by nature, she was, I could see, a woman of few words, she suffered him to get from her some account of her life. That which she related I will here set down with much brevity.

‘The mother of this worthy lady, who had the great happiness to be a Catholic, died whilst she was yet little more than an infant; and well-nigh the first thing of which her memory doth report is the scene at the death-bed of that mother, wherein was manifested towards her much kindness by a good man in a white robe, who had assisted thereat, and whom she now knew must have been a priest, and who had blessed her with the sign of the cross, and prayed that she might one day be a bright star in the crown of our sweet Saviour. Her father, howbeit, having turned Protestant, she was brought up in that persuasion; and, being affianced in very tender years to her present husband, she had married without a due knowledge of his dispositions, and had thereafter led but a miserable life. The chief causes of her unhappiness, as she apprised us, were her husband’s violent temper, his neglect of herself, his addiction of late years to the vice of intemperance, and his shameless persecution of Catholics—which latter, the poor lady made acknowledgment, had engendered yet

another trouble of mind; for, through witnessing the pious resolution, meekness, and resignation of those who suffered for our holy faith, she had, for some while past, begun to entertain doubts whether the Protestant religion, or that other, were the true one. This confession, however, Madam Windwood made, with many signs of reluctance; and when, blessing the good God who had sent those doubts, Father Maitland would have explained our sacred doctrines, and instructed her in the way of life, she seemed terrified, and would scarce listen many moments ere she hurried away. Nathless, that some good seed was sown in her heart by that holy man, which will, in the future time, spring up and bear fruit, or which, peradventure, hath already done so, I may well believe; for at our parting the gentle lady did kneel at the feet of my companion, and, with tears in her eyes, entreat his priestly benediction and prayers for her eternal salvation, and, thereafter, address herself with the same petition to my unworthy self.

‘And, moreover, hath she not, by feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, and visiting the prisoner, performed those corporal works of mercy of which our Blessed Lord hath affirmed that, being done unto the least of His brethren, they are done unto Himself? And shall she fail of reward for those good deeds?’

‘I trow not. And of your charity, dearest friends, I pray you join your prayers to mine, and to his, whose are now of much avail, that that reward may come quickly.’

CHAPTER XIX.

TRIAL BY THE QUEEN'S COMMISSIONERS.

'HAvING sought for him by the space of a week'—so the letter continued—'in all the country round about the Manor House, the pursuivants thought fit, at last, to stay pursuit of the priest whom they had so coveted to retake; and anon set out for Manchester with Father Maitland and me, it being their purpose there to dispose us in gaol. The journey thither was made on horseback, and we rested one night on the road, reaching the town about sundown next day. For to enter it we behoved to cross a river named Irwell—broader and deeper than our Wara—by a strong stone bridge that is called Salfold bridge, and divideth Manchester from Salfold, which is a suburb thereof. On this bridge standeth a building which ere-whiles was a chapel, but is now, as we learned by the converse of the pursuivants, a prison for the confinement of such as do commit the grievous offence of believing as did he who builded it.

'Scarce had we passed to the other side when the Sheriff, who rode a little ahead of the party, signalled with his hand that our guards should halt; and thereupon, dismounting his horse, he stepped forward to meet two gentlemen who were approaching down a road which lay at right angles with the bridge.

'The one of these was a tall man of somewhat commanding presence, with a dark pointed beard and very

grave face, whom—though at that time a stranger to me—I have now reason to know excellently well.

‘This was the Bishop Chadderton—that persecuting arch-heretic, whose fame hath penetrated, this some while past, even to our secluded Waradale; and the other was a minister, with whom, too, I am at present well acquaint. A short parley ensued between the three, but, inasmuch as we were out of ear-short, we could not distinguish what was said. Howbeit, from their gestures and the looks which they cast upon us from time to time, we gathered that the conversation concerned us; and this was certified when presently—the others parting from him, and proceeding upon their way without having spoken to us—the Sheriff called out these words, “I will see to ’t that your lordship’s instructions regarding the prisoners be well observed.”

‘Turning thereafter to his men, the Sheriff signed that they should again move forward; and forthwith—he preceding—we were led up a very fine and long street, called Market-sted-lane, on either side whereof are shops and selling-booths. These, for the most part, were closed, and some idle apprentices who stood without, taking the air and joking one with other, seeing by our clothing that we were priests, betook themselves to shouting, “To the gallows with the Pope’s pedlars! Hang the shaveling Mass-mongers! Away with such vile traitors from the earth!” and other suchlike lewd cries, by the which they earned plaudits, in the stead of reprehension, from our guards.

‘Leaving Market-sted-lane, about midway its length, we came by another street to an open space of ground, whereon stands an ancient mansion builded of timber and plaster, all saving the gables and chimneys, which are constructed of stone. The name thereof is Radcliffe Hall, and before two years back the same was the property of

one Sir John Radcliffe, a noted apostate who hath bestowed it to the town corporation and commissioners for the imprisonment of Catholics.* Round about it runneth a deep moat; and when the Sheriff had called for admittance, they let down a drawbridge, over which we passed to the entrance, where, meeting the keeper of the prison, that officer delivered us into his charge for this night, saying, that by the Bishop's orders we were to be examined on the morrow, and thereafter committed to the New Fleet—too crowded at that present to admit us, but whence a few folk were to be discharged next morn.

'The keeper declared himself well pleased that our stay there should be short, making complaint that the house was already overful, and his pay but scanty for his work; and thereupon gruffly ordering two gaolers to convey us to the only spare chamber there was, himself accompanied to see us safely bestowed therein. This chamber, or rather filthy mean hole—for so in truth it was—being situated close beneath the roof, we had to mount thereto by way of a ladder.

'I had been bidden to go first up the ladder, and upon coming into the cell, I had much ado to avoid retching by reason of the stench and closeness thereof; for the day had been exceeding hot, and the chamber, which was about ten feet by seven, lay, as I say, hard under the rafters. No window was in it—not so much as a slit in the wall—but in one corner of the old roof was a small hole broken through, which might serve to let in a measure of light and air.

* The site of this old hall or prison is Brown-street or Pall Mall, at the time of our story a park, with a piece of water upon it, called the Pool. At a date anterior to that a large lake covered the spot, extending from Market-street to the lower level of King-street. The name of the locality, Pool Fold or Black Pool Fold, carries a reminiscence of this fact.

'Alas! it could serve likewise to let in somewhat beside; but of that more anon.

'Having landed us in the cell, the gaolers made haste to fasten the good Father and me by the wrists with certain hand-shackles, which did hang from two strong hoops fixed in the walls over against one another; and, being pinioned thus, we were hindered of lying down or standing up, and must needs, for to get any ease, sit with our shoulders leaned to the walls. The keeper and his men having thereupon departed, bolting the door upon us, I perceived that the place where my companion had been fettered was right exact under where was that hole in the roof of which I have made mention; and not ill-pleased did I feel thereat, on account of the sultriness of the weather and the stifling heat of the cell. Ah, sweetest friends, how short-sighted a creature is man!

'Being, as I was, bejaded with the journey, nauseated with the foul air, and withal exceeding affrighted for the future, I now began, so soon as we were left alone, to bewail and lament our unhappy condition, and sinfully to rail against them that had brought us thereto. For some while my saintly comrade hearkened to my speech in silence, but by and by he gave me a tender reproof for my lack of trust in our Lord, and my so ill following His holy example of meekness and the forgiving of His enemies. He spake, moreover, many comfortable words concerning the great honour done unto us, in that we were permitted to suffer for Christ, and so put in the way to merit the reward promised in Holy Scripture to them that be persecuted for righteousness' sake. And so joyous withal did he seem at the prospect of martyrdom, so ardently desirous for to be accounted worthy to lay down his life for God and his religion, that for very shame I could but hold my peace, and blush for my cowardliness.

'And so thereafter, darkness having now gathered about

us, we said our prayers and addressed ourselves to sleep, having the bare boards for bed and the bare walls for pillow.

‘How long I had slept I know not, when I was suddenly awakened by a most terrible crashing sound, which caused me incontinently to cry out, deeming that the whole house was down about our ears. But Father Maitland speedily reassured me, signifying that the noise was but thunder, and even as he spake there shone into the chamber a flash of lightning of such a brightness that the like of it I never saw before ; for, of a truth, whiles it lasted I could see all in the room better than by broad day, even to the black spiders’ webs which stretched betwixt the rafters. And almost ere it had gone, there followed such a clapping and rolling of thunder right overhead as verily the prison did shake with the sound thereof ; and thinking that the next flash might strike us dead, I made shift to get upon my knees, and began in much terror to prepare myself for my last end. But albeit that there was stricken one of the chimneys of the house, and that a pair of gaolers who slept in a chamber hard by our own were much injured by the lightning, Providence had not willed it that we should perish in that storm.

‘A very terrible storm it was truly, lasting, as near as I can judge, by the space of two hours ; sometimes, indeed, appearing for a few moments to be abating, but anon returning as fierce as ever. And all that time I stayed upon my knees, at the first praying or saying verses of the *Dies iræ, dies illa*, but thereafter losing all thought of myself and my fears, in admiration of the sweet composure and edifying behaviour of my fellow-prisoner.

‘Not in the least affrighted did the holy man seem all through the storm, but, at its commencement, lifting up his eyes to the hole above his head, whence he could see the sky all ablaze with light, he began to repeat the Psalm *Qui habitat*, going many times over these words, “Thou

shalt not be afraid of the terror of the night." And when presently there came on a fall of rain, so great and violent that it might be likened to a deluge, which further broke away the roof, sending down fragments of mortar and timber upon the venerable father, I saw him, by the flashes of lightning, sitting with his head meekly bowed; and seeing that he could by no means move to shelter himself, I knew that he must needs very shortly be wet through to the skin. Nathless when, feeling greatly distressed thereat, I would fain have expressed my sympathy, he stayed my words, giving me kindly thanks, but declaring that he might well bear with patience so trifling an inconvenience as a shower of rain; and bidding me furthermore reflect how our dear Lord did endure without murmur the shower of stripes which fell upon His guiltless shoulders, and how in His agony there gathered upon His brow, not drops of rain, but of His own Most Precious Blood.

'Howbeit, dearest friends, though he made so light thereof, the being so drenched, and the having to sit all night in his wet clothing, bore for your honoured pastor most serious followings, of the which I must now sorrowfully inform you.

'Having myself fallen into slumber at the ending of the storm, I awoke in full daylight, and noted belive that the eyes of my companion looked heavy for lack of sleep, and that his face was very pallid.

'He acknowledged, moreover, that he felt but indifferent well; and shortly there took him such a fit of shivering and shaking with cold as that he could by no means hold himself still, the which was speedily succeeded by a burning and flushing heat.

'By these symptoms we gathered that he had been seized with the ague, which sickness, for a man of his years, is oftentimes fraught with danger. Notwithstanding this, when the keeper of the prison came to our cell, which

he did betwixt ten and eleven of the clock, he made no account whatsoever of his condition ; but after tarrying until I had eaten some dry bread and the Father had eagerly drained a cup of cold water for his breakfast, he ordered us both to be unshackled, and we were then led forth of the old hall to be taken to the place appointed for our examination, the which, as we presently found, was the college-house, situate in a quarter of the town not very far distant.

‘ For to get thither we had needs to pass down Marketsted-lane, and the morning being very fine and clear after the rain, the apprentices, who had yestere’en scoffed at us, now stood at the shop-doors calling out their wares ; and divers of them did interrupt such cries as, “ What lack you, ladies and gentlemen ?—ruffles, fans, or silken ribbons, yellow or scarlet hose ? ” and other such trish-trash, again to jeer and insult the servants of God. But one of our present guards, a very proper civil-spoken man, who did walk by my side, bade them somewhat angrily hold their peace ; and when we were come to the bottom of the street he very courteously pointed out to me the house of my Lord Derby, one of the chiefest of the Queen’s commissioners.

‘ The mansion lieth to the left, and is named Aldport Lodge ; and begirding it is a park of over seventy acres, whereon are very fine and great trees.* Turning thereafter to the right, we were conducted through a market-place, and so came by and by upon a gloomy building which standeth upon the side of a rocky slope, and which, by information of my courteous guardian, I learned was the New Fleet Prison.† Passing that, we drew towards

* The lodge and park covered Deansgate.

† The Fleet Prison stood in the position now occupied by the Palatine Hotel, but the ground thereabouts has been levelled and altered since the days of the Virgin Queen.

the fair collegiate church which standeth right atop the hill, and which hath a long flight of stone steps leading up thereto. But little beyond the church, on a bridge which spanneth a river called Irk, which, hard by there, runneth into the Irwell, is the college whereof Bishop Chadderton is warden, and wherein are educated in heresy many ministers of the Protestant persuasion.

‘Being arrived thereat, we were forthwith ushered into a room on the ground floor, wherein we found the Earl of Derby and his lordship the Bishop.

‘Standing near by them was he who had taken us captive, and who, though by courtesy generally behight Sheriff, is not, as belike you know, the High Sheriff of Lancashire. He who filleth that office is a Master Holland by name, of whom I have heard much from my fellow-prisoners, a very zealous Puritan, and one who hath been greatly commended by the Queen for his diligence in persecuting them that are of the household of faith. In the room likewise were divers ministers, who, at our entrance, did think fit to stare at us very rudely, and thereafterwards to turn to each other and wag the head.

‘Having been now brought forward and set in front of the table, the Earl of Derby addressed himself to Father Maitland, and inquired of him whether or no he were a priest; to which the good man instantly replied that he was such, and that he thanked God for the honour. “Then,” quoth the Earl, “you are, I suppose, a subject of the Pope of Rome?” “Yea, verily,” answered the father, “so I am; seeing that, in spiritual matters, he is my liege sovereign and the supreme governor of all the Church.” “What!” cried the Bishop, “you avow the Pope to be the head of the Church in these realms?”

“Ay, here as elsewhere,” Father Maitland made return; “and as truly so now as he was heretofore, when our poor country had the happiness to be Catholic.” “Marry, sir,

but you are mighty bold," quoth the Earl, with a very wrathful countenance, "thus to affirm that our gracious Queen hath no authority in this her own kingdom."

"Nay, nay, good my lord," replied the other softly, "I said not any such thing; for in civil and temporal matters she hath, I own, all authority." "Tut, tut, man, we are making question of *ecclesiastical* not of civil matters," broke in the Bishop. "Is't your opinion that in such matters her Majesty hath no claim to our obedience?"

"In such matters," quoth your aged pastor stoutly, "I hold, indeed, that the Queen hath no claim whatsoever to obedience, inasmuch as that the Church, and not the civil Government, hath been appointed by Almighty God for our instructor in righteousness and guide in all spiritual concerns."

"You dare presume then, old man, maliciously and wilfully to contend that Pope Gregory XIII. hath in this kingdom of England certain powers and jurisdiction?" again made question the Earl, with a very black look and stern voice.

'Whereupon, the good man having repeated that such in truth was his belief, and that this being Catholic verity he should, with God's help, hold to it if need be to the death, the ministers began to raise a great clamour, crying out all at once that he was a speaker of sedition and treason. And when the turmoil they made had in a measure abated, Father Maitland made offer to show, in fair dispute, that from the beginning of Christianity the Bishop of Rome hath ever been accounted Vicar of Jesus Christ and Supreme Ruler of the Church Catholic, and that never before was it known that a woman should usurp such post. He proffered, moreover, to prove, both from Scripture and reason, that there is and must of necessity be but one sole head of the Church throughout the world, in order to the maintenance of Christian unity; and that

that head can be none other than the lawful successor of St. Peter, to whom our Blessed Lord delivered the keys of the kingdom of heaven. But albeit that one of the ministers present did appear disposed for to take up the challenge, the Commissioners were not willing that any dispute should at that time have place; and bidding Father Maitland hold his peace upon these points, they now demanded of him whether he acknowledged Elizabeth for his Queen. He having replied that he *did* so acknowledge her, they asked him furthermore whether he meant "both *de facto* and *de jure*."

'To that he answered, after a little consideration, "Yea, that he meant both;" adding also that he "prayed God to bless her, and to make her a good woman and His own true servant." After that, they would know of him whether he held "that the Pope hath power to dispense subjects from their allegiance to their sovereigns." To the which question he made response, "that, in times past, such power was acknowledged by all Christendom, and had been wielded to the great benefit of nations, but that to hold its legality was not matter of faith." Being pressed, however, to say further what he thought of Pius Quintus his bill of excommunication, he begged to be excused of delivering any opinion thereabout. And taking this request to be a proof that he did consider that Bull binding, they all began again with one accord to rail at him for an evil-minded traitor and villain; and the Commissioners, declaring themselves thereafterwards to be well assured of his guilt, did commit him to the Fleet Prison, there to await his trial upon the charge of high treason.

'With that he was led aside and thrust by one of the guards into a corner of the chamber, where, one of his shivering fits coming on with great violence, he was presently, through the good-will of the Sheriff, supplied with

a chair whereon to rest himself; and I was now called forward to take my turn to be examined.

‘Inasmuch, however, as that the questions wherewith I was plied differed but slightly from those propounded to my venerable brother, I shall not, dearest friends, weary you with a repetition thereof. Suffice it but to acquaint you that, having called to mind the shame I did experience when before I had denied my sacred vocation, I now confessed, though not without much inward quaking, that I was a Catholic priest; that I had entered this country contrary to the statutes, and had remained herein by the space of five years, exercising all that time my priestly functions. I refused, moreover, to acknowledge the Queen’s supremacy in matters ecclesiastic, or to abjure any of what they were pleased to term my errors. And so, having by God’s grace acquitted myself not altogether unworthily, I too was loaded of our inquisitors with lewd reproaches, and remanded to prison.’

CHAPTER XX.

THE MANCHESTER FLEET PRISON.

‘AT the last sentence, good friends, I was bidden to stay my writing, and to betake myself to bed, and, being now refreshed by a night of sound slumber, I again take up my pen for to continue this my narrative.

‘It being somewhat past midday when we got to the Fleet, we were apprised by Master Worsley, the keeper, that the prisoners’ dinner was over, and that, for this day, we must content us with but scanty fare. And thereupon giving order that there should be brought unto us what victuals were left, we were kept in a little chamber near by the entrance-door until they had fetched thither some scraps of cold meat and hard bread, of which truly but little sufficed us, for the Father’s appetite was small by reason of his sickness, and mine failed me through excitement and inward wrath at our unjust commitment. Our meal, therefore, being soon ended, we were forthwith carried up a flight of stairs, and put into a room wherein were already about a dozen others.

‘This room, which was very straight, though somewhat long withal, had two windows whereby it was lighted, outside whether were strong iron bars. The floor thereof was most filthy—so that it was plain there went never across it either broom or mop—and the walls were rough-built and devoid of plaster. Round about at the foot of them were affixed stone benches, and beside these were two movable settles of wood; but other furnishment was there none whatever.

‘So soon as we were entered and had seated ourselves, I looked round upon the company, and was not slow to perceive that these our new comrades were, for the most part, men of good condition—which, indeed, was most true, there being then, and yet remaining in divers parts of this prison, many folk of the highest quality, both ladies and gentlemen, besides a great number of the poorer sort, whom they cause to herd together in a common room below stairs.

‘Having made speedy discovery of Father Maitland’s bodily ill-condition, our fellow-prisoners—who, saving one, were all Catholic men—did manifest towards him extraordinary great kindness. In particular, I may set down that one ancient gentleman did show himself very compassionate; for, taking a cloak whereon he was himself seated, and rolling it together for to make a pillow, he did tenderly urge the good priest to stretch himself out upon the bench, and to rest his head thereupon. He gave him, moreover, some wine, whereof, on account of his own indifferent health, he is permit to purchase one small bottle per week; for the which, as he certified us, Master Worsley, who is a most grasping fellow, doth charge him alway over three times the rightful sum. This ancient gentleman, who is very tall and of a fair person, exceeding thin, but of a most engaging mien, abideth still in the prison, and, in truth, is not unlike herein to end his days. His name is Sir John Southworth, and he owneth a large mansion and estate called Salmsbury, at the present in possession of his son. From converse had with him that afternoon and at other times, I have learned that he hath now been for many years a prisoner for Christ His sake, having aforetime been confined in Halton Castle, Cheshire, and removed hither when the Fleet was first builded. This grievous bondage, and other his sufferings by the loss of goods and health, he hath, as his companions do heartily *testify*, most piously and meekly borne—all being inflicted

upon him for no reason other than that he will not consent to abjure the Pope and become apostate from our holy religion. His son, howbeit, as himself acquainted Father Maitland and me, with many tears, hath this many years past forsaken his faith, and now professeth himself to be a very stout Protestant.

‘At the intercession of this son, Sir John furthermore informed us, he had, some little while ago, been suffered to return home for a space; but a great outcry having been raised by certain malcontents at this slackening of authority, he had presently been fetched back again. And now, as he made smiling complaint, his case was become worse than ever; for whiles, by reason of his ill-health, he had, until within that last week, been allowed to take the air and exercise himself in Aldport Park and about the college-grounds, this liberty was now denied him, the cause being that he did steadfastly refuse to listen to readings of the Protestant Scriptures, and to commentaries made thereupon by sundry ministers, who, by commandment of the Queen’s Council, do visit the prison at all hours, but more especially at meal-times, for to torment in this fashion them of our sort.

‘In the company whereamong we did thus find ourselves set down was likewise another gentleman, who hath been long time in prison, and who also was fetched to Manchester from Halton Castle with Sir John Southworth, the two being very close friends. This was Mr. Townley of Townley, a pleasant-featured godly-living gentleman, and withal of a most cheerful disposition. He, too, remaineth as yet in the gaol, albeit that there is some talk of his being shortly granted a discharge.

‘Besides ourselves there were also, among these our comrades and fellow-bondsmen, four other priests—all of them seminary priests, as they are termed—of Douay or Rheims, whither that college hath of late been translated.

With one of them, a Master George Ostcliffe—who, though somewhat older than me, did take his orders after my time—I fell by and by into a discourse concerning the college and our studies therein, which did so greatly beguile and please me, that for the time being I well-nigh forgot my trouble of mind. And whether by him or some other I cannot now be sure, but I had information given me that same afternoon that in the prison with us was one Donna Alana, widow of the brother of our President, Dr. Allen—a lady whom I remember full well to have once seen at the college in company with that learned man.

‘At the present time she hath been here over nine months, and is, as I understand, greatly troubled by one Sir Edmond Trafford of Trafford—a notable renegade from the faith of his forbears—who doth visit her almost daily, and most diligently laboureth to pervert her.

‘For companion-sufferer this lady hath one of whom I have heard you, sweet Sir John Anderton, oftentimes to speak—viz. the Lady Egerton of Ridgley, regarding which lady, I am apprised, there hath been received by Master Worsley command from the Earl of Leicester and Council that she should be dealt with gently, but that, at the same time, she should be caused to hold conferences with the ministers, to the end that she may be turned from her faith. So far, howbeit—blessed be God’s holy name!—both ladies have holden out bravely, and continue steadfast in their religion.

‘And now, most dear friends, lest I make this letter too long, and so become tedious unto you, I will forbear to make mention of any other of my fellow-prisoners, saving only two, of whom I must pray you to suffer me, as briefly as may be, to give you some little account.

‘They to whom I refer—to wit, James Leyburn, Esquire, and Master John Finch—are both Lancashire men and laymen of wealth and consideration.

‘With the former I made good acquaintance on the evening of this first day of our committal to the Fleet, but the latter I did not see or speak with until the afternoon of that following. Both one and other of them are, without doubt, prisoners for conscience’ sake; but, albeit that he is in durance chiefly on account of his religion (which may be proven by that they have offered to let him go if he will but promise to go to church), Squire Leyburn differeth from the rest of us here, and all other Catholic men whom I know or ever heard tell of, in that he will not allow Queen Elizabeth to be his rightful sovereign.

‘He is like, therefore, to be condemned and executed for treason—and, indeed, he looketh for naught else—as they can with some show make that opinion of his a cover for so dealing with him on grounds of religion.

‘That, howbeit, which did primarily cause me to be greatly taken up with this gentleman was the fact that he was well acquaint with those two holy men of the Society of Jesus, Fathers Campion and Parsons, whose fame for pious zeal and abundant success in gaining souls to God did, as you well know, good my friends, whiles they were toiling in these parts of the Lord’s vineyard, resound even to our quiet Waradale. Ofttimes, the Squire Leyburn hath assured me, were those devoted men lodged at his house at Cornbrook, near Manchester; and many stories hath he recounted to me of how, while they abode in this town, they did over and over again escape the snares and pursuit of the searchers. He hath showed me, moreover, two letters, which he guardeth as his principal treasures, keeping them concealed betwixt the cloth and lining of his doublet. The one of them is in the handwriting of Father Campion himself, and recordeth how he fell into the persecutors’ hands at the house of one Master Yates of Lyford, having been betrayed by a man named George Eliot, and how he was taken thence from a secret chamber, wherein he was

asleep with two other God-fearing priests, and carried to London, his legs tied under the horse's belly, his hands bound behind him, and on his hat a paper, whereon was written in large letters, "Campion, the seditious Jesuit." This letter was wrote in the Tower on the 23d day of last July, being that following his delivery thereto; and at the end of it are some most heavenly words, wherein he doth certify his friend James Leyburn of his willingness to suffer whatsoever torments and tortures the Lieutenant of the Tower and other officers may see fit to afflict him with, and of his readiness withal to lose his life a thousand times over for his religion.

'The other letter, which is of a goodly length, was sent to Squire Leyburn from a belamy [intimate friend] of his who resided in London. It containeth a full account of Father Campion's foul mistreatment in prison, of his trial and condemnation for a crime whereof he was altogether innocent, and of his execution, together with those of two other priests—Ralph Sherwine and Alexander Brian—who were made passable with him on the same day of last December. This last letter the worthy Squire, having taken me aside to a corner of the common room I have told you of, did read over to me on the next morning after my coming hither; and of some effects which were wrought upon me thereby, I shall, with much shamefacedness and distress of heart, have necessity to write anon.

'John Finch—that other of my fellow-captives with whom, dear friends, I desire to make you somewhat acquainted by this letter—is a notable man among us by reason of the great afflictions he hath passed through in this gaol. As I have said, he is a native of Lancashire, having been born in the parish of Eccleston of Protestant parents. When he was come to man's estate, being married and well settled in the world, he was seized with doubts concerning the new religion; and having looked well into

matters, and made examination thereof, he resolved to embrace the Catholic faith.

‘Accordingly, seeking him out a priest, he became reconciled to the Church; and being a most fervent convert, he thereafterwards spent the whole of his time in striving to procure the conversion of others, going about with the servants of God from place to place, introducing them to divers Catholic houses, and serving them most diligently in quality of catechist and clerk. At length, howbeit, having been betrayed to the Earl of Derby, he was apprehended along with Master George Ostcliffe; and at his examination, wherein he manfully affirmed the Pope to be head of the Catholic Church, and refused to take the oath of supremacy, his lordship the Earl did, with his own hand, smite him most violently upon the cheek, which indignity was but a fitting prelude to them he hath since endured.

‘For, of a truth, of all secular persons who have yet lain in this prison, there hath, belike, been none so shamefully abused as Master John Finch, though all his offence, so far as I can learn, is that he will not, either for bribes or threats, consent to go to church.

‘For such consent, albeit, the Governor Worsley hath not tarried; for upon sundry occasions the gaolers have been bidden of him to drag the poor gentleman, will-he, nill-he, to the parish church, which command they have executed with exceeding cruelty, taking him by the heels and suffering his head to beat against the stones all the way up to it, whereby he hath sustained many grievous wounds and injuries.

‘And for that when they have gotten him there he will not listen to the sermon, but will either stop his ears or make a great noise, and so drown the preacher’s voice, they have ofttimes thrust him into a dark and stinking dungeon, and there kept him for whole weeks at a time,

giving him no food save oxen's liver, and of that but scantily.

'Other punishments, moreover, as scourging and loading of him with heavy fetters about the neck, wrists, and ankles, they have inflicted upon this brave confessor of Christ; and all to no purpose, seeing that for naught that they can do will he renounce his creed.

'At the time when I first saw him, Master Finch had just been letten out of that horrible dungeon, having lain therein upwards of a month; and what with the dampness, stench, and other incommunities of the place, and the having been well-nigh famished, he was so sick and giddy that he could scarce stand upright. That same day, nathless, they mulcted him of a great sum of money, as they did likewise Sir John Southworth, Master Townley, Squire Leyburn, and many others; for one of the chiefest wrongs which are practised in this prison lieth herein, that the richer sort of recusants are forced not only to pay all their own charges, but furthermore to be at the cost of providing victualling and other necessities for them of the poorer condition. But God ruleth in the heavens; and though He be long-suffering, iniquity shall not always prevail. He will surely avenge His own elect, and they who here suffer for justice will hereafter inherit glory. Pray, sweetest friends, I beseech you, for them that now persecute God's heritage, that they may not reap the reward of their evil deeds, but that, being called to repentance, they may become sharers together, in heaven, of the bliss of them whom on earth they have afflicted.'

CHAPTER XXI.

THE PRISONERS ARE VISITED BY A MINISTER OF THE REFORMED FAITH.

‘Of a surety, my friends, I wot that, were I now in your midst, you would will me to signify to you without further delay how it fared with your beloved pastor as did regard his sickness. And fain would I, were I able, certify you, his loving children, that that sickness did shortly pass away. But such, in truth, was not the case; for all through that first day of our imprisonment in this place, he continued to be seized, ever and anon, with fits of his malady; and when, at four in the afternoon, they brought us our supper of oaten bread, he could not taste thereof, though he quaffed very willingly a cup of small beer. This causing me to feel ill at ease concerning him, I was comforted to find, as I presently did, that we were not to be sundered in the night-time.

‘For to save candle-light, and so spare our covetous keepers’ pockets, the prisoners here are made always to go to bed by nightfall, which at that time did come on betwixt eight and nine of the clock. At such hour accordingly the governor coming into the room with a posse of underlings, we were all separated and lod off in companies. To our great satisfaction, Father Maitland and I perceived that we were to have for chamber-fellows Master James Leyburn and Master George Ostcliffe. The cabin, howbeit, to which we were consigned with them, was so small that nighly the whole floor of it was covered by two

straw-mats which lay thereupon, either of them having but one filthy blanket for to serve as coverlet. Nathless, that we had reason to consider ourselves excellently favoured in being appointed to this cell we speedily learned; for no sooner was the door locked upon us, and the gaolers departed, than Master Ostcliffe made known unto us that he had a secret to divulge; and thereupon, rolling up one of the mats, he carefully loosened a board underneath it, discovering a large hole, whereinto he bade me put my hand, which when I had done, I felt something soft like silk. He willed me to guess what it was; for the room having only one narrow slit for window, and the hole being in the shadow of the wall, we could not see thereinto. And when I could not guess, he told us, laughing for joy, that it was a priest's chasuble, and that under it were alb, stole, and other vestments, besides a portable altar, sacred vessels, and every fit requisite for saying Mass. Upon hearing this good news Father Maitland fell straightway upon his kness and gave thanks to God, exclaiming, "*Laus tibi, Domine, Rex æternæ gloriæ!*" Then rising, he heartily embraced Master Ostcliffe, and inquired of him how he came by the things; who answered that they had been brought unto him by degrees by certain ladies of his acquaintance, who had conveyed them into the prison under their hoops; so that for the nonce, you see, good friends, that absurd fashion which Mistress Rutherford doth so greatly mislike hath proven serviceable to a good end. At that present, as Master Ostcliffe furthermore informed us, he had had all the furniture over a fortnight, and so had been able to celebrate Mass every morning in that space, not only to his own unspeakable happiness, but also to that of Squire Leyburn and two other pious gentlemen who had for a long time shared this cell, but who had that morning been discharged from the prison. He then very kindly proffered that, so long as we

should occupy the cabin together, we other priests should take it in turns with him to offer the Holy Sacrifice, beginning next morning with Father Maitland in the case his health should be sufficiently amended. To this proposition the holy man did agree with most grateful thanks, declaring that now indeed was any bitterness which might have been in his imprisonment altogether passed; for that since our sweet Lord would here condescend to visit us in person, the dry valley had become a fruitful garden, and the wilderness did blossom as a rose. And therewithal, it being decided that the rest of us should communicate at his Mass, we made our several confessions in preparation therefor, and afterwards laid us down to sleep.

‘By reason, howbeit, that poor Father Maitland did moan greatly in his slumber, and had beside several very bad attacks of his disorder, we did all get but a sorry night’s rest; and for my part, I lay awake through the most part of it, gazing at a strip of moonlight which did play upon the wall over against me, and thinking over divers events of my past life, more especially of them which had befallen me in the happy college-days whereof I had been discoursing with Master Ostcliffe, and during those five peaceful years which I spent in Waradale amongst you, my most dear friends. And then I fell to wondering what would become of me and the companions that lay with me in the chamber, whether it would hap that any of us should be released from prison, or whether we should all be called to seal our faith with our blood; and then, going on to consider that such fate was in verity most like to overtake us who were priests, the fear of death got hold of me again, and I trembled from head to foot, and had much ado to calm myself by prayer. Albeit, when I had for some while called upon His holy name, the Lord was pleased to give me a measure of peace; and so towards morning I

fell into sleep. From that I was awaked by Father Maitland rising to prepare for his Mass, who, on my inquiring how he did, answered that he felt marvellously well.

‘And truly methinks that for the space of that Mass the joy of his spirit did quite overcome or set him above his bodily weakness, for never did I see him, or any other, celebrate with such sensible devotion.

‘The sight of his face, as I saw it that morning, copiously bedewed with tears, and shining with a most heavenly rapture, is not like, were I to live a hundred years, ever to pass from my memory. Ah, beloved friends—I cannot refrain from writing it—that was your venerated pastor’s last Mass! Scarce had we put all the things back into the hole, and laid us down again, ere the gaolers came to bid us rise; and when we had gotten into the fuller light of the common room, I noted that, although there yet lingered thereupon that singular radiant look, the countenance of my blessed brother was of a deathly paleness. I saw, too, that though he strove so to do, he could not eat his breakfast, which, like our supper the night before, did consist of black bread and small beer. Yet, notwithstanding that, from these signs and others which did presently show themselves, it was plain that he had by no means bettered, but was rather worsened in his complaint, he would not this morning yield to repose himself, as on the foregoing day, but preserving a most cheerful face and comportment, he did sit upright upon a bench, conversing on pious matters with Sir John Southworth and others.

‘Now, leaving him in such goodly company, I had in the course of the forenoon gone aside with Squire Leyburn to a corner of the room, for the purpose that he might read over to me that letter of his friend concerning Father Campion’s execution, whereof I have afore made mention; and just as he had finished, and was thrusting it back

to its hiding-place in his doublet, we heard the key grating in the lock of the door ; and when it was opened, there entered unto us the governor, Worsley, having with him one Master Oliver Carter, a most notable man in Manchester and all the country round about.

‘ This gentleman, who is now pretty well advanced in years, is a minister and a fellow of the college ; and is, moreover, esteemed by them of his persuasion to be a very great preacher. In his creed he is a strong Puritan ; and is withal so eaten up by zeal for the cause of the heretics, that he doth mortally hate whatsoever doth in any way savour of our holy religion, abhorring for that reason all manner of signs and ceremonies, and being desirous that there should be no longer bishops, or other episcopal office-bearers in his Church, but rather that the government thereof should be committed unto men called presbyters. But of these new-fangled notions I can give you no clear explication, not rightly understanding them myself.

‘ Being entered, this gentleman did look round upon us very gravely, and thereafterwards saluted us with these words, “ God give you good-morrow, my masters, and grant you His Holy Spirit, that ye may be turned from your idolatry.” Then seating himself, and drawing forth from his pocket a Bible, he apprised us that he had come to confer with us upon religious concerns, and prayed us to listen peaceably to his discourse, promising very civilly that, if we would but do that, we should afterwards have liberty to lay our heads together, and see if we could answer him aught touching the matter whereof he designed to treat, and that to our answer, if we could make him any, he would give due attention. This fair-seeming offer some that knew with whom they had to deal were for declining ; but Father Maitland—deeming, good man, that if, by first hearkening to him, we could get the minister to give us a hearing, some poor words spoken by a Catholic man might,

by God's grace, strike to his mind conviction of his error—did urgently counsel that it should be accepted. The company therefore, yielding to his suing, signified to Master Carter their assent to his proposition; and he, forthwith opening his book, proceeded to read in a loud voice the third chapter of the Second Epistle to Timothy. Then, premising that he intended not this morning to join issue with us concerning St. Peter's preëminence among the Apostles, or in any way to handle the murderous question of the supremacy, but rather to strike at the root things, and to speak of the great crying sin of our Church which had brought about the godly Reformation, he took for text certain verses wherein St. Paul doth commend Timothy, in that from a youth upwards he had known the Holy Scriptures, and began to descant thereupon, avowing first that it was of prime necessity that each man should have and hold, and should read, study, and interpret, for himself the sacred Testaments. And after that he made affirmation that we Catholics did set at naught the word of God and substituted therefor the tradition of men; and declared, furthermore, that whereas God appointed the inspired volume for to be our instructor in truth and guide to Heaven, the Pope and the Church of Rome have taken it away, wrapped it in a napkin, and hidden it in the earth, and so have robbed Christ's flock of the Bread of Life, feeding it, in the stead, with vain sacraments and foolish forms, which are in truth, quoth he, but empty husks fitted to fatten swine.

'And so, having held forth in this wise full half an hour, using very fine-sounding words, but showing himself most clerkless, inasmuch as that he demonstrated not any point he advanced, and by his lack of logic caused divers of us ofttimes to smile, he consented at last, when our patience was well-nigh exhausted, to hold his peace, and to suffer, as he had promised, that an answer should be made him.

‘Inasmuch, howbeit, as that we could not all speak at once, we consulted for a moment together, and then craved Father Maitland, he being elder than any amongst us, to make reply to those silly accusations of our adversary.

‘This the sick man did with much dignity and sweetness, showing, *imprimis*, that so far from making small account of the written gospel, Holy Church hath ever been its guardian and preserver; that she hath at all times counted it to be a most precious portion of the deposit of faith; hath constantly instructed her children therefrom; and that, or ever the arch-apostate Luther were born, she had caused it to be translated into divers tongues for the benefit of the faithful. He acknowledged, albeit, that at sundry times the Church hath most wisely withdrawn the Bible from such as, falling into heresy, and contending that their heresy was upholden thereby, would thus have wrested it to their own destruction; just as in like manner, although a civil magistrate might suffer a soldier to bear a sword, he would, of his mercy, snatch it from a madman who should design therewith to cut his own throat. And having made good these several postulates, our stout champion did next address himself to attack the position of such Protestants as do hold with this minister that the Bible only is the word of God, and that naught is to be believed which may not be proven thereby. Using all courtesy, he on this head advised Master Carter that he, and all of his sort, do by their own deeds contradict their own words, seeing that they do not content themselves with delivering the Scriptures into the hands of the people and letting them make shift to understand them, but that they do also set up teachers and preachers for to expound the same, and thus plainly discover that they consider them not sufficient of their own selves to establish the Protestant religion.

‘He manifested, moreover, as clear as daylight, that

the Holy Gospel doth itself controvert this new heresy, inasmuch as that in no one place doth it declare itself to be the teacher appointed of God to the conversion of the world, but contrariwise, in passages more numerous than can be reckoned, doth assert the Church so to be. And lastly, he demanded of Master Carter how, in the face of the fact recorded in the Acts of the Apostles—to wit, that thousands were “daily added into the Church of such as should be saved,” and that by the ministry of the Apostles, and or ever a word of the gospel was wrote—he could persist in his erroneous doctrine; or how, when he considered that our Blessed Lord Himself did send forth the Twelve with command to “go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature,” making, at the same time, promise to be with them “always, even to the consummation of the world,” he could yet hold to his enmity against the successors of the Apostles, the priests of the Catholic Church—they who, in fulfilment of the aforesaid promise, had been the blessed instruments in converting to Christianity every nation of Europe, and among them England herself! But when, to make an end of his discourse, the venerable Father would have exhorted the minister to repent him of his heresy, and to be reconciled to God and His Church, the other, who, all the while he had been speaking, had been raging and fuming interiorly—as was clearly detected by his countenance and gestures—burst forth into a great fury, and began to rail exceedingly. “See,” quoth he, “how shamefully you that follow her are befooled by her arts and crafts and subtleties! She is like her spoken of in the seventh of Proverbs, who maketh religion her pretext and uses much art, flattery, impudency; she hath bewitched the souls of men by pretending religion. And under heaven is no religion so consonant, so congruous, so suitable, so agreeable to corrupted nature, to flesh and blood, as the religion of the Church of Rome!” And so,

after this fashion, the incensed minister continued to rail and scoff, until for lack of breath he was fain, at length, to stay in his speech. Whereupon Father Maitland, rising to his feet, did strongly rebuke him, bidding him take heed to his words, and bethink him that, by thus abusing and belieing Christ's pure spouse, he was evening himself with those wicked Jews who reviled our dear Lord Himself, calling Him a glutton, and a wine-bibber, a blasphemmer, and other lewd and false names. "But God forgive you, poor man," added he softly; "for verily I believe you know not what you do." With that the minister did leap up, perfectly beside himself with wrath, and in a voice like thunder demanded of Master Worsley whether he would suffer it, that he, a gospel-preacher, should be thus bearded and defied by a vile old Popish priest; and threatened to report on it to the Bishop, were the prisoner not severely punished for his misdemeanour. "Marry, content you, good sir; he shall be punished to your liking, I warrant you," quoth Master Worsley, who, being of a like way of thinking with the Calvinist minister, was himself mightily displeased with Father Maitland's talk. And going to the door, he called for a couple of servants, who, being come in, did by his direction load the blessed man, aged and sick as he was, with heavy gyves and fetters, and there-afterwards led him off, whither I knew not.'

CHAPTER XXII.

THE PRISON-VAULTS.

‘By your own feelings in reading thereof, you will, my friends, easily conceive into how strong an indignation I was thrown at beholding my venerable brother thus discourteously treated and roughly handled, and that for no cause but that he had refelled the minister’s arguments, a crime which, of a surety, was not legally punishable. And well will you believe, I wot, that, on coming that evening to the cell wherein we had lain together the night before, and not finding him therein, as I had confidently hoped, my anxiety concerning him did wax very great. But albeit that throughout all the day following, whensoever I could get speech of our keeper or any of his men, I did most diligently sue to be permit to see him, or, at the least, to be given some tidings as to how it fared with him. I gained naught for my pains but the bidding to hold my peace; and, by the next day after that, I had myself fallen into such a sorry plight, as that, for a space, all thought of him was well-nigh driven from my mind. Now as regards my own mishap it befell me in this wise:

‘On the second morning after my lodgment in the prison, I had said Mass in presence of my two remaining chamber-fellows, and on the third—it being now Master Ostcliffe’s turn to celebrate—we had all risen betimes, and the sacred mysteries were almost ended, when, of a sudden, the bolt of our door was drawn back, and before we could hide aught of the furniture, or Master Ostcliffe could slip

off his vestments, there burst in upon us Master Worsley and one of the gaolers. This last—by name Thomas Green—was, as I had already been apprised, a fallen Catholic, who aforetime had been a prisoner for theft, but who, having renounced his faith, had, for reward, been bestowed to his present post.

‘ Like other apostates, he was now become exceeding bitter against the religion he had forsook, and, in divers ways, did contrive to harass and annoy its professors, but more particularly any priests who had the mischance to fall under his power. His suspicions having, by some means, become aroused, this man, as himself averred, had, in our absence yesterday, made close search of the chamber, and had alighted upon our treasure. But, desiring to catch us in the act of transgressing the statutes, he had tarried until morning; when, having made sure by listening without, that Mass was going forward, he had hastened to inform the keeper. And he, Master Worsley, having followed the fellow without delay, and so become satisfied, by his own eyesight, of the truth of his report, did, with his tongue, belabour as soundly, and then, certifying us that the consequences of our deed would shortly be made manifest unto us, he gave order that we should again be locked up. That mandate being obeyed, we were left in quietude until about ten of the clock, when we were summoned forth of the cell, and carried below stairs to the governor’s parlour. There we found the two Manchester Commissioners—to wit, my Lord Derby and the Bishop of Chester—who, informing us that they had been made acquainted with our misconduct, did furthermore declare that they were minded to suffer no suchlike goings-on in the prison, and that they should, therefore, proceed to punish us according to our several deserts. And, thereupon, addressing themselves first to take cognisance of Squire Leyburn’s case, they fined him the sum of one

hundred marks,* ordained by the law of the realm as penalty for hearing Mass, and enjoined, moreover, that he should be kept for two days and nights in a cell by himself, and without any food whatsoever. And, having thus summarily dealt with him, they signalled a dismissal, and he was led away.

‘Turning thereafter to Master Ostcliffe, these persecuting Commissioners demanded to know of him whether among his acquaintance (for there were many who did visit him in the prison) had procured him the vestments and utensils, and promised that if he would but give information on this point, they would pass very lightly over his own offence. He, howbeit, knowing well what would happen them, were he to disclose who were his accessories before the fact in this heinous offence of saying Mass, did utterly refuse to name them, asserting boldly that he would not answer the question. “O,” quoth the Earl, promptly laying aside his former civility, “you will not answer the question forsooth? Marry, worthy master, but we shall see anon an we cannot find a way to *make* you answer it. Come, good keeper,” added he, “we will, by your leave, adjourn to the cellar.”

“As your lordship pleases,” quoth Master Worsley, with a grim smile; “I will see to it that the lamps be lighted.” So saying he left the room; and in a few moments returning again, he declared that all was in readiness.

‘Upon that, signifying that what I was like to see might serve me as warning and ensample, the Commissioners directed that I should be caused to follow along, with my fellow-priest, and so led the way up a little passage, at the end whereof was a narrow iron door, which, being opened, discovered a flight of steps going downwards into a murky darkness. At the bottom of these steps was

* A mark was 13s. 4d., two-thirds of a pound. .

another passage, longer than that above, and lying atween walls of solid rock, down whether, as I noted by the light of oil-lamps affixed against them, there trickled drops of water. Midway its length was an opening in the passage, looking like unto a black arch, and peering in thereat as I passed I made out in the dimness that at the foot of some few more steps was a barred door all covered with rust and slime; and at the bare sight thereof I could not hold myself of shuddering. Leaving that behind, we entered after our leaders into a dismal vault hung about with ill-burning lamps, the faint glimmering whereof did but serve to reveal the gloom. Presently, howbeit, I grew accustomed to the murk, and looking about me then, my eye lighted upon an oaken frame which stood in the farthest corner. The frame was raised about three feet from the ground, and had, at either end of it, a roller with cords and pulleys attached thereto; and not slow was I to guess that it was that instrument of torture called the rack, used by our adversaries for to extort confessions from accused recusants. Pointing thereat, my Lord Derby again pressed Master George Ostcliffe with the question respecting who had fetched him the new ——— for Mass, and once more that admirable man: ——— very pale face but most firm voice, made reply. Whereupon, signing to four stout fellows, who had stood themselves at each corner of the machine, the good priest, and throwing him on his back on the floor inside the frame, did fasten his hands and feet in the ropes, and afterwards laying hold of certain handles served to move the rollers in contrary directions, turned at them until they had raised his body to the level of the frame. Then, bidding them hold him in that painful position, the Council now repeated their interrogation; but to no purpose, saving by a shake of the head, Master

Osteliffe would vouchsafe them no return. Then becoming much distempered, the Earl miscalled him a stubborn caitiff, and caused the rollers to be moved farther apart, so that I heard all his joints crack, and saw that with the agony there had broken out upon his brow great drops of sweat. But albeit that they stretched him again, until, fearing that he would be torn limb from limb, I grew cold and sick with terror (for by nature you know, good friends, I am but timorous), yet could they get nothing from him at all but once or twice a low groan. How long the torture lasted I could not say, for every moment of it did seem unto me as an hour; but at length I saw his face, wherefrom I had felt unable to withdraw my gaze, turn of a most ghastly hue; and deeming him dead, I sank upon the ground in a swoon.

‘Recovering from that by dint of being rudely shaken and belamed, I found that they had released him, and that he had but fainted like myself; and I heard the Bishop then bid them carry him carefully to his cell, and give him something soft to lie upon. But the Earl seemed ill-contented with the order, saying that he was an obstinate ass, and deserved no favours, and that he designed yet to break his stubborn spirit, and therewith enjoined Master Worsley to levy from him next day the sum of 200 marks,* if so were that he had that much money in his possession.

‘And with that they let him go, and I, shaking and trembling, was left standing before these men of power who, having both looked hard at me for some minutes, did turn to each other and whisper together a while.

‘Then smiling upon me, and speaking in a most courteous manner, Bishop Chadderton offered that he would consent to dispute quietly with him, or some other, concerning religious matters, and to the end that I might be instructed in the Protestant creed, they would permit

* This was the statutory fine for saying ‘no’.

my transgression, and hold me acquit of all punishment. But seeing that, by agreeing to this proposal with that end he had named, I should be compromising my faith, and owning myself not entirely satisfied therewith, I made the sign of the cross upon my breast, and so gained strength to refuse it. Upon which, acquainting me that from my face they had reckoned that I should have been of a wiser sort, the Commissioners condemned me to be put into the dungeon, saying that whilst therein I might, perchance, see fit to alter my mind; and thereafter went away with Master Worsley, leaving Thomas Green and two other men to execute the judgment.

‘Taking me by the arm, so soon as the Commissioners were departed, these fellows had me out of the vault, and leading me up the passage began to haul me down the steps to the door I have told you of; Thomas Green dinging in my ears the while that I should find the dungeon well aired through Master Finch having lodged in it so long, and I resisting with my whole might, for I felt a most singular dread of the place. But, as of course, I gained naught by my struggles but some bruises; and having unlocked the rusty door, Thomas Green gave me a violent thrust, which sent me down upon the floor; and before I could get up again, I was shut in. Then, listening with all my ears, I heard those cruel men laughing as they went away up the steps; and presently, by a distant clang, I knew that the upper door had been closed, and that I was left alone in this horrible underground region.

‘Howbeit, taking a resolution to strive against my cowardly disposition, I blessed myself again with the sacred sign, and anon essayed to face my condition as stoutly as I might. The hole was black as pitch, and the smell of it most foul; but being minded to make better acquaintance therewith, I set myself to step it from side to side, and so ascertained that its compass was just

thirteen feet by fourteen. The walls, as I touched them, felt damp and slimy, and the floor was quite thick of mud and filth. No furniture was there of any sort; neither a stool to sit on, nor a mat to lie on; and so, setting my back against the wall, I stood still in the darkness, hoping that I might ere long be letten out.

‘But when hour after hour passed by, and none came anigh, either to bring me any food, or to break the stillness by a word, all my courage did ooze away, and I was almost on the point to weep over my present unhappy strait, and the blackness of my future prospects. For what, I now began to question with myself, was to befall me were I to continue steadfast in my religion? and I had no intent otherwise. Should I be all my life kept in durance? or should I be banished the kingdom? or should I, which was most like, be done to death at the hands of the executioner?

‘And then I fell to considering what a terrible death is that of hanging, drawing, and quartering, which, to the scandal of our country, is inflicted by law on innocent Catholic confessors both lay and cleric. And calling to mind every particular of the deaths of Father Campion and his companions, recorded in the letter read me by Squire Leyburn, and, in especial, of how one Alexander Brian had been cut down before he was quite dead, and dismembered alive, I grew exceedingly affrighted, and to calm myself began to pace the dungeon to and fro, striving to divert my thoughts from musing on this subject. At last, wearied with the exercise, and bespent by excitement, I sat me down upon the muddy ground, and leaned my head against the damp wall; and shortly thereupon I fell asleep.

‘And in my sleep, dear friends, I dreamed this dream:

‘Methought that I was back in Waradale, and that I

was walking by the river's brink on a most fair summer day. The sun shone brightly and the sky overhead was brilliant blue. In the trees warbled divers sweet-singing birds, and the water plashed and gurgled with a very pleasant sounding. And all at once I bethought me to go call on Farmer Weston, and so turned away towards Rudston Edge.

'Scarce, howbeit, had I gone many steps from the river's side ere the sky grew cloudy, and in another moment the whole scene had changed, and I found myself in a town street somewhat like Market-sted-lane.

'The street was quite desert and still ; but going to the end thereof, I came upon a great square crowded with folk, all shouting together ; and looking to find the cause of the uproar, I saw, in the centre of the square, a gallows tree with a man hanging thereon. And then methought the crowd did suddenly part in front of me, discovering to my sight another man stretched upon a quartering board betwixt two great fires, the one, as I did quickly guess, prepared to burn his heart and bowels, and the other to boil his quarters. Over this man was stooped the executioner, a huge fellow with a very red face, who, chancing to lift up his eyes, and catching sight of me where I stood in the opening left by the crowd, did swiftly raise himself upright, crying out, "What ho, there ! By the gods, another priest ! Stop him, good folk ! Come, Master Shaveling, and take thou also thy wages !" And with that he did spring forward, brandishing in his hand a bloody knife, and I methought turned to fly. The crowd, howbeit, closing behind, hemmed me in ; and looking backward, to see if the executioner were verily following, I perceived that he had drawn quite nigh, and, my eye glancing beyond him, I saw that he who had been in quartering was risen and standing upon the board, with his body open and bleeding. And with the horror of that

sight I awoke, screaming aloud, and bathed from head to foot in a cold sweat.

‘Not being able, at first, to collect my thoughts, the darkness of the dungeon served to increase my affright. But by and by, recollecting where I was, I rose to my feet and began to move about, essaying to compose myself by reflecting that I had been dreaming, and that the fear-some vision was but the consequence of my foolish musings about what was wrote in that letter of Squire Leyburn’s. Nathless, do as I would, I could not rid myself of the ghastly spectacle I had seen so plain. All in vain did I stride backwards and forwards, feeling blindly in the dark, until I was fain to rest my wearied body against the dungeon-wall. Ever before my eyes was the self-same object, and in my mind the self-same dread; and feeling belive that unless I were speedily released from this dreadful and solitary place I should lose my reason, I went to the door and shouted, and knocked upon it, and strove to shake it, and shouted again at the top of my voice. And after that I listened for answer, but there came none; no, not the faintest sound, though I strained my ears to hearken. Then I fell upon my knees and strove to pray; but the heavens seemed to become as brass, and I could get no comfort. And rising I once more paced the dungeon, and then again belamed the door, and shouted, and listened, and cried again, until I was hoarse.

‘But no one gave heed or came nigh; and so hours and days, *weeks* even, meseemed, did drag away, and I began to feel the pangs of hunger superadded to other my miseries. And now a new terror laid hold of me, to wit, that I had been forgotten, or that it was designed to leave me here to die of starvation, which conceit, growing upon me, did drive me well-nigh beside myself. For to me, as I pondered it, this did appear a worser fate than hanging,

—that I should be left to die like a dog in this vile noisome hole.

‘But so, in truth, it seemed like to hap; and having in my agony, many times and oft, repeated my shouting, and banging upon the heavy iron door until I was quite spent with fatigue, I at the last gave way to despair, and sitting me down upon the floor, fell presently into a kind of dull stupor.’

CHAPTER XXIII.

‘BLESSED ARE THE DEAD THAT DIE IN THE LORD.’

‘I AM now come to a part of this my history which it becometh me, most dear friends, to relate with deep humility and grief of spirit, but which, nevertheless, I shall not suffer that shame or pride let me of telling you.

‘From the stupor whereinto I had fallen I was startled, after I know not how long a space, by the flashing before my eyes of a bright light, which, though at the first it did but daze and bewilder me further, served by degrees to rouse me so far as that I became conscient of two men standing in the doorway of the dungeon—the one bearing in his hand a lantern, the other a platter of food.

‘At sight of this last I eagerly stretched forth both my hands—growing sensible, of a sudden, that I was ravenous with hunger—and the meat being forthwith given unto me, I fell upon it with great greed and devoured it up. Then, revivified thereby, and withal refreshed by the purer air which did enter the dungeon from without, I came yet more fully to myself; and recollecting now whereabouts I was, and all the miseries and torments I had come through, I laid hold by the legs of him who held the lantern, and whom I now recognised for Master Worsley, and implored of him, for the love of God, to let me forth of that horrible loathsome den. This he, the keeper, certified himself very willing to do, but on one condition only, viz. that I would yield to obey the Bishop’s

behest, and suffer myself to be instructed in the new religion.

‘ To my everlasting confusion—had I not since, by God’s grace, repented thereof, as it were in sackcloth and ashes—I gave consent to this proposition. And warmly commending my decision, the keeper anon caused his fellow to take me by the arm and help me up the steps ; for what with famishing and other causes, I was too weak to walk alone, and so with some pains they had me to a cell on the first floor of the prison, wherein was a comfortable bed and other goodly furniture.

‘ And now, sweet my friends, to cut short this ignominious confession, and so give you as little scandal as may be, I will say, in a word, that having, by the space of some ten days, held frequent conferences with ministers—and among others with the Bishop himself—and having by them been alternately threatened and beflattered,—menaced, on the one hand, with all manner of indignities, and in the end with a cruel death, should I persist in holding to and avowing my priestly character ; and on the other hand, promised an excellent living and divers substantial favours if I would but turn my coat,—I at the last gave way, and agreed to go to their Protestant church. And having so done one Sunday, I should straightway have been discharged the prison, but that I still boggled somewhat at the oath of supremacy, which they willed me to take, signifying that until I should do so they could not well let me go. All that week following, howbeit, I was allowed great liberty, being kept apart from the other prisoners (whom, in sooth, I had no wish to see), and suffered to walk abroad, in company of a most civil guard, whensoever and wheresoever I pleased. Of which permission, the weather being marvellously fine, I made good use, seeking to hold myself from reflecting by rambling about the town, whereof I did more particularly affect certain

streets wherein were congregated colonies of Dutch weavers, by reason that it did amuse me to watch them through the open doors of their dwellings busy at work upon their looms. At another time, being out most of the day over, my comrade and I would fetch our walk through Aldport Park, stopping now to see the deer fed, and anon to watch the sport of falcon-flying ; and then again, choosing a contrary direction, we would stroll along by the side of the river Irk, whereon stand divers corn-mills which serve the town, and hard by whether the fullers are wont to hang their cloth to bleach in the sun.

‘ But, albeit, that having so shamefully succumbed to the temptations of the devil, and to the promptings of my own corrupt and cowardly nature, I all that week struggled diligently to forget aught beyond this present evil world, and to bring myself altogether to renounce my holy faith, I had much ado to stifle the voice of conscience, and, notwithstanding my fair treatment, was far other than happy. By the next Sunday, howbeit, I had so well succeeded in that my wicked essay, as that whiles in the church, whither I had again compliantly betaken myself, I made resolve to advertise Master Worsley, on my return to the prison, that I was now willing to take the oath, and thus regain belive my coveted liberty, and earn the benefits I had been behot.

‘ But, blessed be His holy name! beloved friends, in that, though I did thus design to forsake Him, God, of His mercy, had not forsaken me, for scarce had I taken that guilty resolution ere there befell me a most singular thing, which I shall here record. It being sermon time, one Master John Mallyns, a college fellow, was holding forth on the text, “ Be subject unto the powers that be,” and had gotten to about the midst of his discourse, when all of a sudden there sounded in my ear a voice, as clear as ever I heard aught in my life, twice calling over my name,

and speaking thus: "Rupert! Rupert! what shall it profit thee if thou gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of thine own soul?"

'The voice and the speech transported me with astonishment, and I looked, first to the right hand and then to the left, to see whether of the two gaolers, who sat on either side of me, had spoke those words. But from the aspect of their countenances I perceived immediately that neither of them had so done, which, indeed, it was not like that they should.

'And thereupon, falling into a still greater admiration, I cast a glance behind me; but there, behold! was no one anyways nigh unto me, but an old beggarman fast asleep, and two fashionable young dames whispering earnestly together, and who, I judged, were examining the texture of one another's gowns, inasmuch as that either had hold of the other's sleeve and was pulling thereat. They, it was plain, had not addressed to me that strange and solemn warning, and, truly considering that they could by no possibility be apprised of my name, and that the voice had sounded like the voice of a man, I little needed to assure myself thereof.

'And now, beginning to understand that that I had heard had been uttered by no mortal tongue, but that Almighty God had either spoken unto me Himself, as He did to young Samuel in the temple, or else that He had sent one of His holy angels to deliver that timely admonishment, I began to quake with awe. And with my head bowed upon my breast, I awaited the end of the sermon (whereof I heard not another word), growing every moment more and more conscience pricked at sight of the enormous guilt I had committed and meditated, until, like St. Paul on the road to Damascus, I was, in the spirit if not in the flesh, fairly stricken to the ground with amazement and terror. And being presently come back to the prison, I

betook myself straightway to my cell, and having carefully shut-to the door, I fell upon my face on the ground, and there lay, bemoaning my sin with bitter tears and lamentations, and beseeching God, of His infinite compassion, to have mercy on me, a hell-deserving rebel. To these my ardent supplications there was, howbeit, vouchsafed no answer, saving only this—that I was seized of a most strong desire to see Father Maitland, and to pour out at his feet in sacramental confession all the vileness and unfaithfulness whereof I had been guilty. Now since that day whereon I had seen him dragged, sick and in chains, from the common room, I had not set eyes upon the holy man; but as soon as, after my releasement from the dungeon, I had in a measure recovered from the mazed condition into which I was fallen, I had made anxious inquiries concerning him, and, to my great satisfaction, had received certification that he was now quite amended in health, and was being well cared for. The which, as I did ere long learn, was a wicked falsehood, designed, doubtless, to content me for to stay apart from him, and so hinder that he should influence me against the evil course I was on the point to pursue. Now, howbeit, all my feelings and purposes being by the grace of God utterly changed, I sought Master Worsley's presence, and humbly begged of him permission to visit my aged friend and spiritual father—forbearing, at that time, to make mention of the alteration in my dispositions, lest, being angered thereby, he might refuse the request.

‘This precaution notwithstanding, our keeper did, though sooth to say very civilly, deny me the favour I asked. But all that day I so continued to importune him, that at the last, towards evening—either wearied of my solicitations, or moved by God, in whose hands are the hearts of all men—he gave a reluctant assent, and bade *Thomas Green* take me to the good man's cell. Accordingly,

having very gratefully followed that renegade, and being come to the top of the house, I entered the little chamber he had unlocked to me, and there found Father Maitland lying upon some straw in a corner, and loaded about the neck and arms and feet with heavy irons. Upon hearing the door grate, he had made shift to raise his head, and on seeing me there broke over his face a most sweet smile of joy and welcome. To this, howbeit, I could not on the moment respond, having at bare sight of him staggered backward in dismay; for so changed and wasted was he, that I should scarce have known him, and by one glance, moreover, I had detected that he was even then *in articulo mortis*. But recovering myself with an effort, as I saw him striving to raise himself into a sitting posture, I sprang forward to assist him, and thereafterwards, flinging myself on the floor by his side, I knelt and kissed his fettered hands. And while yet I could not speak for grief and disappointment, I heard him softly repeating to himself a *Deo gratias*, and then these words, “Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace;” and thereupon, finding voice, I indignantly gave him information how that they had deceived me with protestations that he was recovered of his sickness, and afterwards besought his pardon for that I had not before used my best interest to be permitted to visit him. But when, furthermore, I began to bewail his present condition, and to make inquiry how he had been served since our separation, the good Father stayed my words, begging that I would leave speaking of his matters for a space, and the rather treat of my own, concerning which, he affirmed, he was most anxious to know somewhat. “For,” quoth he, “I have been informed, dear brother Rupert, that you have taken the oath, and gone to church, and that you are, therefore, to be straightway set at large—the which tidings, as you may well suppose, have caused me exceeding great anguish of mind.”

And with that he earnestly prayed me to tell him if there was aught of truth in the report. Whereupon, bowing down my head, I confessed all, he mingling his tears with mine, which, God being pleased to give me the grace of true contrition, I did now copiously shed; and after that, praising and blessing our Heavenly Father for His great goodness manifested towards me in that, by so singular a means, He had brought me to repentance, the blessed man raised his manacled hands and bestowed upon me his priestly absolution and benediction. Which no sooner had I received than I felt in my soul a great joy, and a peace, the like of which I had never before experienced, so that now, truly, I began to understand what St. Paul signified when he spoke of a "peace which passeth understanding." Moreover, at that same instant, dearest friends, there was taken away from me all my former cowardly and unchristian fear of death, and I was filled with assurance that "the sufferings of this present life are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come." And as, for joy and thankfulness, I was keeping silence and musing upon these words of Holy Scripture, there came into my mind a most fervent desire to atone for my sin of backsliding by offering my life a willing sacrifice to Christ our Lord; and there, withal, turning to Father Maitland, I besought him to aid me by his prayers that I might obtain the honour of martyrdom. To which the holy man, tenderly smiling upon me, did thus reply: "Nay, dearest Rupert, I will rather beg for you a *perfect resignation to the will of God*; the which, according to the opinion of divers great saints, is to be preferred even to martyrdom itself. I would have you, my son, to place yourself entirely at God's disposal—to be so utterly stript of all self-seeking as that you may not even *desire* to do *great* things for Him, but simply to do and suffer *what He wills*. For this, dear Rupert, is that *pure and full resignation* which, as Thomas à Kempis de-

clareth in his *Imitatione Christi*, can alone bring us true liberty of spirit. Through the agony of the prayer, ‘Not *my* will, but *Thine* be done,’ cometh, my son, the rest and calm which enableth us to use this better petition, ‘Do with me what Thou wilt.’”

‘Having so spoken, your aged pastor lay back upon his straw bed, panting for breath, and with his face well-nigh as pale as that of a corpse; and I, my friends, held my peace, in order that he might recover himself a little, and also that I might the better digest what he had said. And as I gazed upon him I felt convict that he was, in his own experience, now enjoying those blessed fruits of perfect self-surrender whereof he had spoken; for notwithstanding that his countenance bore marks of fast-approaching dissolution, there was on it a look of most singular sweetness and composure. And when, presently, his breathing had become somewhat less laboured, we fell together into a most edifying and delightful discourse, wherein, among other things, he confessed to me that, ever since his capture, he had himself ardently coveted to shed his blood for Christ His sake; but that, upon hearing of my apostasy (whereof he had, doubtless, been informed with intent to vex and torment him), he had resigned this wish, praying God to accept the sacrifice thereof, and to take his life whensoever and howsoever he pleased, only, in return, to grant, of His charity, my restoration to grace, if so were that I had indeed fallen away from the faith. He apprised me, furthermore, that, from the hour he had made this request (albeit that the ague had then left him), he had felt himself growing ever more weak and feeble, and that this very morning, feeling in his body that death was now close at hand, he had, just about the time I had heard that voice in the church, been pleading with Almighty God for my everlasting welfare, and also that, if it were in accordance with His holy will,

he might see me once more before he died. And now, this favour having been granted, and all solicitude concerning me, as he declared, happily removed from his mind, the holy man expressed the greatest alacrity to depart out of this world, and the utmost joy in the prospect thereof. And when, at his request, I had heard his last confession, and had, in my turn, pronounced over him that remission of his sins which, as a minister of God lawfully sent, I had faculty to bestow, I sat by his side, while the darkness slowly begirt us about, feeling, dearest friends, that this little upper chamber of the Manchester Fleet was, in verity, transmute, by the dying saint's presence therein, from a gloomy prison-cell into the very portal of heaven. For, albeit that I could no longer see his face, I did hear the blessed man constantly breaking forth into canticles of joy and praise, his voice meantime growing fainter and fainter, until, while he was in the very fact of repeating that sweet hymn of St. Bernard of Clugni, wherein he celebrateth the perpetuity of heavenly joys—to wit, that beginning thus :

‘Hic breve vivitur, hic breve plangitur, hic breve fletur,
Non breve vivere, non breve plangere, retribuetur.
O retributis ! stat brevit actio, vita perennis,
O retributis ! cœlica mansio stat lue plenis’—

and just as he had gotten to those words which, being translated into English, are as followeth, “O Sion all golden, My eyes they are holden, Thy light till I see,” I heard him give a sudden cry of rapture, and thereafter came a soft fluttering of his breath, ending in a gentle sigh, and then all was still, and I knew that he had finished his course.

‘Stretching forth my hands in the darkness, I straightened out as well as I could his fettered limbs, and kneeling by the sacred remains of this true servant of God, I addressed myself to recite the prayers for a departed soul;

but, all I could do, my lips would frame no other words than these, viz. “He giveth His beloved sleep;” the which I found myself repeating over and over again, until by and by I seemed to understand, as though by special revelation of God, that he needed not any of my poor prayers, inasmuch as that, by the union of his sufferings with the merits and death of Christ, his sins had been completely purged away in this world, and that he had accordingly passed straight from death unto life. And of this I was the more convinced when, in about the space of half an hour afterwards (the man Thomas Green entering the cell with a light), I saw his face, for thereon was a smile of such heavenly joy as that it did seem to me like a reflex of the glory of that celestial city, of whose brightness and beauty methinks there was a sight given unto him at the moment before his death. And now, dear my friends, I have told you that which I feared to acquaint you with at the beginning of this letter, or in an abrupt fashion, wotting well that your faithful hearts would thereby be wrung with grief. Nathless, I beseech you, sorrow not as those without hope; for rather, indeed, ought you to rejoice, seeing that he whom you love, having kept the “commandments of God and the faith of Jesus,” is of the number of them of whom it is written in the Inspired Word, “Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord.”

‘You and I, dear brethren, being yet in the period of our probation, must perforce suffer the buffetings of sin, and wrestle with the world, the flesh, and the devil; but he, O happy soul! can no more offend against his God, being translated thither where naught that defileth can enter. You and I, yet remaining on this earth, are subject to cold and heat, to storm and tempest, to chance and change, to imprisonment, bonds, torments, death; but he, O happy saint! is there where they hunger no more, neither thirst any more, and where there is no more death,

nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow. You and I, being yet detained in the body, and deprived of our Redeemer's visible presence, are but strangers and pilgrims travelling through a vale of tears; whereas he, O thrice-blessed virgin and confessor, is among them that "follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth," in that city that hath "no need of the sun, nor of the moon to shine in it; for the glory of God enlighthenth it, and the Lamb is the lamp thereof."

'For why, then, I pray you my friends, should we, who are yet in the battle, sorrow for him who hath entered into his rest? Nay, verily, doth it not behove us, on the contrary, to clap our hands for joy; and in the stead of sitting down idly to weep his loss, to gird up the loins of our mind and to follow him, even as he followed Christ?

'Do you so, most dear friends, and thereby you will fulfil the wish which was closest to the heart of him who for nighly half a century dwelt among you in Waradale, your spiritual father and friend, whose bowels did yearn over you with a most tender compassion, as I can truly certify, seeing that scarce an hour did we pass together, from the time of our capture until the day of his death, but that his discourse did turn upon you, and who, on the eve of his departure out of this world, did urgently beseech me to find means to communicate with you, to the end that I might deliver you a message from him couched in the words of Holy Scripture,—whereof, as you well know, he was a most diligent student,—to wit, those taken from the third chapter of the Apocalypse, "Keep the word of My patience; and I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon the world to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly: hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. He that shall overcome I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God." To which message, beloved friends,

I, who through human frailty did so miserably fall, but who, by the superabounding mercy of God, have risen again to strive after justice, do earnestly pray you to give heed.

‘And now suffer me one further word concerning my unworthy self, and I will anon bring this long—and I fear me prolix—letter to an end. On the next morning after Father Maitland’s death, I made announcement to Master Worsley, and thereafter to the Commissioners, he having sent for them in hot haste, that, Almighty God helping me, it was my intent to cleave to my most holy faith, and rather die a thousand deaths than ever again offend Him by going to their church. Whereat, flying into a great rage, his lordship the Bishop did order me again to the dungeon, wherein, to His name be the praise, whose grace is sufficient to all things, I abode over a fortnight, feeling all the while a most sweet serenity of mind, and in no way impatient or dismayed at the darkness or other incommodities of the place. Upon that, seeing that they could not now *terrify* me into professing to be of their religion, they tried again for a whole week to *coax* me thereto. But that not succeeding any better, they at length suffered me to return for a time to the company of my fellow-prisoners of the better condition. Albeit, every now and again, they have since thought fit to set me in solitude for many weeks together, and so to importune me to go once more to church, that—but that I look upon this trial as a fitting punishment for my sorry slip from virtue, and that I strive to imitate the patience of my sweet Saviour—I should at such times find my life very burdensome. I thank God, howbeit, that, His strength being sufficient for my weakness, I still continue the same man as since Father Maitland’s translation to the kingdom; and I implore you, sweet friends, of your charity, pray for me, that, remaining “faithful unto death,” I may here-

after obtain "a crown of life." And now may God have you in His holy keeping ! Send me word, I pray you, how it fareth with you all ; and if I can I will write to you again ; so farewell. Yours, in life and at the hour of death, if God grant the desire of my heart,

‘ RUPERT ASHWORTH.’

This letter—which, as we have already stated, arrived at Waradale about the close of August 1582—was read with deep interest by those to whom it was addressed ; and answers to it were sent by several members of the two families of Erleston Glen. It was long, however, before Master Ashworth could again obtain permission to write to his friends ; and when eventually he did manage to do so, Erleston Grange and Hall-i'-th'-Wood had passed into other hands : the Andertons and Rutherfords had left Waradale, and his letter in consequence never reached its destination. It was not until many years subsequently that they to whom it had been directed gained, through indirect means, some information regarding his fate ; but as this will be the most convenient place for giving, in a few words, the sequel of his history, we will here append it as a postscript to his own epistle.

For nearly two years Rupert Ashworth was detained in the Fleet Prison of Manchester without being brought to trial ; and during this period, in addition to miseries endured in common with his fellow-prisoners, arising from bad and insufficient food, and from the filthiness and overcrowding of the prison, he suffered much, as he had affirmed in his letter, from the solicitations and persecutions of ministers. He, however, who, out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, ordaineth to Himself praise, and who calleth things that are not as though they were, enabled him to resist all importunities to relapse ; and strengthened by each successive victory over temptations, the

young priest's character underwent a complete transformation.

Instead of the weakness and indecision by which his virtues had formerly been marred, he now became noted for bold and uncompromising adherence to principle; whilst at the same time, sanctified by affliction, his natural amiability of disposition increased, all the impatience and irritability which had exhibited themselves since his capture vanishing, and giving place to a ready obligingness and sweetness of temper which greatly endeared him to his companions in misfortune, and gained for him the good-will even of the enemies of his faith.

At length, having witnessed many changes amongst the prisoners—some of those who were at first his fellow-inmates in the gaol having been dismissed with heavy pecuniary punishment, some removed to other places of confinement, and some again (of which number was Squire Leyburn, who was executed in 1583) made to suffer the full penalty of the law—he was taken to Lancaster, along with three other priests and his friend John Finch. There, at the Lenten assizes of 1584, he was brought with his companions to the bar, when John Finch and James Bell, a priest lately captured, were sentenced to death under a charge of high treason, whilst he and the two other priests who had accompanied him from Manchester, though also found guilty by the jury, were, owing to the fact that the judge had received instruction to put no more than two to death at this time, condemned only to perpetual imprisonment, and the loss of all their goods.

The judgment was a great disappointment to Master Ashworth, whose desire for martyrdom had waxed stronger than ever on the near prospect of its fulfilment. But, recollecting Father Maitland's dying words, he strove to follow his counsel, and to resign himself entirely to the

Will of God ; and as a reward God presently sent the angel of Death to summon him to rejoin that holy man in heaven. Three months after his removal to Lancaster, a violent epidemic, arising from the use of diseased meat, broke out among the poorer prisoners of the Castle ; and having gained leave to do so, Master Ashworth attended to the sufferers with the most self-forgetful devotedness, falling in the end a victim himself to the infectious disorder, and so glorifying God in his death fully as much as though he had for His sake endured capital punishment.

And that both our priests, as well as thousands of noble men and women, who in this and succeeding reigns suffered for the Catholic religion, were as truly martyrs as were those of their brethren who perished upon the scaffold or block, there can be no question. History has preserved for us no record of the names of hundreds who during this season of persecution were done to death in the foul dens of prisons scattered throughout the kingdom by starvation, torture, and ill-treatment of all descriptions ; nor of other hundreds who were first reduced to destitution and then banished the country ; nor of others, perhaps forming a still more numerous class, who, deprived of lands and goods, wandered about their native land, hiding in holes and caves, beggars and vagrants on the face of the earth. Of them the world was not worthy ; and though their names are written in no earthly volume, they have a place in the golden pages of the Book of Life.

CHAPTER XXIV.

NICHOLAS WESTON RETURNS TO WARADALE.

WRAPPED in a coarse frieze mantle, which he had drawn closely around him, and wearing a cap of the same material, made somewhat peculiarly, with broad ear-flaps tied beneath the chin, an elderly man was making his way, one March afternoon, along the little-frequented road leading from Orrleigh to the valley of the Wara. Frozen snow filled up the ruts and inequalities of the winding country lane, and lay several feet deep upon the range of hills he was approaching. The clouds, of a dull leaden gray, looked ominous of a further downfall, and the river, which as he neared the end of his journey ran parallel with his road, rolled along swollen and turbid. A bitter north-east wind met the traveller full in the face, causing him every now and again to walk with his head lowered to encounter its fierce and sudden gusts.

But unheedful apparently of the cheerlessness of the scenery, or the discomfort of the weather, the elderly pedestrian pressed bravely forward, until, at a bend of the road, he came within sight of the tiny hamlet of Wolfesford. A somewhat sad smile lighted up his face as his eyes fell upon the group of dwellings of which it was composed, and upon reaching them he walked slowly by, peering in at each of the latticed windows he passed. Arrived at the last cottage, he stood still for a moment, adjusted the cloth lappets of his cap carefully over his ears, and then pulled at the latch of the door. The latter

did not, as he had expected, give way, and after rapping upon it for some time with his knuckles, without eliciting any response to the summons, he stepped backward into the road. Obtaining thus a full view of the house, he perceived, as he had not previously done, that the single casement of the ground-floor, which was upon the side of the door farthest from the direction he had come, was closed upon the outside by a wooden shutter, and that a rudely-painted sign of some hypothetical animal, half lion, half bear, which had formerly ornamented its projecting upper story, had been partially torn from its fastenings, and was now fluttering loose in the wind. Giving vent to a cry of surprise and consternation as he noted the deserted and dilapidated appearance of the cottage, the traveller turned hastily away, and retracing his steps knocked at the door next but one—that belonging to Peter Chadwick's primitive shop or store. This was speedily opened to him by the owner himself; and stretching forth his hand to that round-headed, black-eyed little individual, the elderly man exclaimed,

'What ho! Peter, is 't thou? Faith, aw'm fain to see thee again, mon! God gie thee good den.'

'Good den to *thee*, freend,' returned Peter, accepting the proffered hand, but eying his visitor doubtfully as he continued, 'Yo ha th' best o't though, maister, for, by my halidom, aw cannot bethink me o' thy name.'

'Cannot bethink thee o' my name!' repeated the other, laughing; 'why, Peter, thou ne'er means to say 't thou doesn't kneaw me? Marry, mon, tak another look;' and the speaker turned his face full to the light.

Peter *did* take another look, and a prolonged one, at the pale and sunken features presented for his inspection, and intelligence at length dawning in his face, he ejaculated, 'God save us! Nicholas Weston, is't *thou*? 'Ods-body! coom in eawt o' th' cawd, prithee, good fellow, an'

sit thee deaun by th' foire ;' and drawing a seat nearer the hearthstone, he added, ' So they've letten thee eawt o' prison, Nicholas ; an' by th' looks o' thee, thou'st had but an ill toime on't there. Certes, it's small marvel aw shouldn't ha' kneawn thee ! Hast bin sick, freend ?'

' Ay, Peter, aw *hav'* bin sick, i' verity,' replied Nicholas, seating himself on the bench, and stretching out his fingers over the blazing wood. ' An' so's Mary, poor lass ! who's bin nighly at deoth's door. But we'll fratch abeawt that anon. Tell me, Peter, heav lights it th' tavern's shut up ? Wheer's Abel Hardinge ?'

' In th' churchyard, alack, all that's leeft o' him, poor chap !' returned Peter, shaking his head sadly. ' He wur buried six weeks sin', Nicholas ; and afore that he'd bin bedridden abeaut th' space o' a month.'

' Heigh ho ! but aw'm reet fashed to hear on 't !' sighed Nicholas, turning away his head to hide the tear which trickled down his pallid cheek as tribute to his friend's memory. ' He was ailin' a bit afore I wur took to prison, Peter, an' it's my belief naught's killed him but torment o' conscience. He lost a' his spirit, and wur never th' same mon, as thou'll agree, fro' th' first day he went to th' Protestant church. Maister William tow'd me he'd worsened a deol, but—'

' *Maister William* tow'd thee !' interposed Peter, looking much astonished. ' Why, Nicholas, wheer hast seen *Maister William* ? Sure he's not i' Manchester ?'

' Nawe, Peter, he's i' Liverpool,' returned Nicholas. ' But nay, stay,' he pursued, correcting himself—' he'll be on th' sea by this. He wur to set sail for France at twelve o' the clock this forenoon. God send him a safe voyage !'

' Amen ! But aw thowt he'd bin eawt o' th' country long ago,' rejoined the storekeeper. ' Why, it's nigh upo' three months sin' he leeft Waradale for to go get his

clerking for a priest. Heyday! aw wish th' poor young gentleman hadn't letten that foolish maggot into his head. But coom, good Nicholas, beseech thee, tell me belive when didst get eawt o' gaol? An' heaw didst hap upo' Maister William? An' wheer's thy good wife? An' what's brought thee again to these parts? An' hast gi'en in to obey th' law, good neebour, neaw it's too late to save thy heawse and lond? An' wheer hast come fro' to-day? A long journey, aw warrant, for thou lookst bespent.'

Nicholas smiled at his companion's string of questions, but before he had time to answer any of them, Peter's wife and two children, who had been absent upon his arrival, entered the cottage, causing a diversion in the conversation.

Like her husband, Dame Chadwick did not immediately recognise the visitor, who, in truth, was greatly changed since he had, some four months ago, been driven by Justice Windwood from his ancestral home, and carried to the Salford-Bridge Prison of Manchester. No sooner however, did she learn that the now wasted and aged-looking man before her was the once stout ruddy-cheeked yeoman than sinking upon a stool she burst into a flood of tears. But checking herself almost instantly, she rose again, and bidding her two little girls replenish the log-fire, hastened—uttering the while garrulous expressions of pity—to prepare for her guest the best meal the house could afford.

Having walked on this blustering March day some fifteen miles over ill-made cross-roads, and eaten as yet nothing but a crust of bread, the food set before him was very welcome to Nicholas Weston. When it had been partaken of and the remnants removed, all gathered around the fire, and Peter, who ever since his entrance into the house had from time to time been casting inquisitive and discontented glances at Nicholas's head, now

broke forth, in a tone of some impatience,—‘Dame ! Nicholas, why dost not tak’ off that feaw-looking mak’ o’ a hat ? Marry, good man, it’s none so beseeming. Thou lookst quite strange-loike wi’ ’t on thy head.’

‘Belike, thou’lt think aw look stranger *wi’ eaut* it though, Peter,’ responded Nicholas, his face flushing crimson. ‘Heawbe’t, aw’ll tak’ it off, freend, an’ thou shalt joodge for thyself.’ And suiting the action to the word, Nicholas removed the cap, which until now he had kept tied beneath his chin.

Exclamations of dismay, on the part of the storekeeper and his wife, were echoed by the children, who clung in terror to their mother’s lap, as Weston, turning towards them first one and then the other side of his head, presented to view two unsightly scars covering the places where formerly had protruded a tolerably large pair of ears. And when presently the excitement had in a measure subsided, the disfigured man—who had, without remonstrance, again donned his singular head-covering—proceeded, in answer to their questions, to inform his friends that, some six or seven weeks past, an order had been issued by the Queen’s Commissioners for the discharge, from each of the overcrowded Manchester prisons, of a certain number of their poorer inmates, who, having been robbed of all they possessed, were unable to defray the expenses of their own wretched maintenance. As a set-off, however, against this forced or politic discharge, various punishments had been administered before granting it to those who still remained obstinate in their recusancy—to which category both himself and his wife, who was confined in a separate part of the same building, belonging, he had been condemned to the loss of both ears—a favourite punishment of the period—whilst to Mary had been adjudged the ignominy of a whipping. In his vernacular dialect the brave Lancashire yeoman then went

on to relate, to his attentive listeners, how, upon being released from prison, he and his wife had consulted together, and had resolved to betake themselves to Liverpool, in which town there dwelt a brother of the good dame's, who kept a saddler's shop, and through whose instrumentality Nicholas hoped to obtain some employment which might enable him to earn sufficient money to emigrate with his Mary to a happier country, where to serve God according to their consciences would entail no legal penalties. Accordingly, having travelled thither on foot in raw January weather, begging food and shelter upon the road, for they were utterly destitute, and suffering from the effects of their respective punishments and previous semi-starvation, both, upon arriving at the end of their journey, were taken seriously ill. Nursed, however, with extreme care by Reuben Marsh, Mistress Weston's brother, and a pretty sweet-tempered daughter, who constituted his sole family, the worthy couple recovered ere long some degree of health and strength, and Nicholas then, at his brother-in-law's suggestion, became an apprentice to his own trade, he and his wife remaining as honoured guests beneath the roof of their kind relatives.

Like the majority of those of his class throughout the kingdom, Reuben Marsh had made a pretence of conforming to the established religion, and by going once a month to his parish church, he managed, notwithstanding that his daughter Janet never accompanied him thither, to evade the calamities which a more unyielding adherence to his faith would have drawn upon him. In secret, however, he still attended the worship of the ancient Church, facility for this being afforded him by his acquaintance with a member of the household of a lady of title, who resided in the outskirts of the town, and who kept in her house a disguised priest. Having to his great joy been informed of this fact, Nicholas Weston, on

the first Sunday that his health would permit, went, in company of his host and niece, to Mass at Lady Arbuthnot's, and there, happening to turn his head towards the conclusion of the service, he perceived, with deep amazement, that William Anderton knelt by his side at a few paces distant. As a matter of course he presented himself after Mass to the young man, who was equally astonished with himself at the unexpected rencontre. And after exchanging information concerning each other's experiences since their respective departures from Waradale, William informed Nicholas that he had, for some time past, been seeking in vain for a reliable person whom he could intrust with a letter of much importance for his father, and thereupon begged Nicholas to undertake its conveyance, promising him ample remuneration for the trouble. Delighted to serve one whom he knew and esteemed, and at the same time to earn money for the object he had in view, Weston willingly accepted the commission, and so soon as the letter was written, set off for his native place. With the contents of the sealed paper, which, in evidence of his assertion, he produced from an inner pocket, the worthy ex-farmer was perfectly familiar, and a considerable portion of them he communicated to his companions. Of one or two points, however, and those of principal moment, he deemed it advisable to make no mention; for, notwithstanding that there was in his mind no conscious mistrust of his former neighbours, the perils of the times were apt to engender caution, even in the most unsuspecting individual.

Having thus accounted for his reappearance in Waradale, and related what had befallen him since quitting it, Nicholas now asked for, and received in his turn, all the news of the neighbourhood, learning first, as a complement to the information already given him respecting Abel Hardinge, that he had, before his death, been

reconciled to the Church by Father Christopher, and that, immediately after his burial, his son Miles had sold the tavern and its furniture, which he inherited, and left the district for a more populous one, where he hoped with better success to practise his profession of pharmacy. In answer to his interrogations, the Chadwicks moreover informed their visitor that the good Jesuit Father still remained in hiding at Erleston Grange, but that, owing to the vigilance of Sir Paul Cunningham, who had appeared of late to suspect the existence of a priest in the vicinity, the utmost caution had to be used in order to preserve the secret; and that, on account of the danger which would attend discovery, he, and some few others among the conformists, had altogether given up being present at Mass. Since his own seizure, however, Peter further informed Nicholas that none of the inhabitants of the valley had been sent to prison; Justice Windwood having, as he (Chadwick) had been told, received instruction that, by reason of the gaols being so full, no more of the poorer people were for the present to be condemned to imprisonment, but were simply, in case of refusal to attend the Protestant service, to be mulcted of their possessions. In obedience, therefore, to this command, Master Windwood had, in two or three instances, where, under Father Christopher's influence, parishioners who had already gone to church, repenting of the act, had absented themselves beyond the specified time, instituted an auction of their poor effects, and turned the delinquents penniless from their homes. And what would have become of these—in his estimation extremely foolish people—had it not been for the charity of Sir John Anderton and Squire Rutherford, Peter could not say. But that these gentlemen had received them, and other unfortunate sufferers for their faith, into their houses, and had subsequently provided them with means for gaining a livelihood in other localities,

the storekeeper, with hearty expressions of admiration, declared, going on further to state his fears that, by this generosity, added to the constant drain upon their resources of the monthly fine, the two families of the glen were becoming much impoverished. To these tidings, related with the addition of many details, Nicholas listened with great interest; but there were two other items of information which Peter had reserved to the last, and which, upon their being now imparted to him, caused the good yeoman much distress.

These were, first, that his own beloved abode, 'the White Heause o' Rudston Edge,' had fallen into the hands of a bigoted Protestant, who, directly after his settlement there, had been made a churchwarden of St. Michael's, and who was now an ardent admirer and supporter of Sir Paul Cunningham. And, secondly, that Walter Willoughby had, on the previous Sunday, to the surprise of all present, made his appearance in that church, and on Wednesday evening last (this day being Friday) had in consequence been banished from Hall-i'-th'-Wood by his stepfather.

Of this latter fact Peter had been apprised, he said, by a servant from the Hall, who had told him, furthermore, that the Squire had been in a terrible passion on the occasion, and had been overheard to accuse his stepson of entertaining a passion for the daughter of Justice Windwood—the man who had blighted his sister's happiness, and brought ruin and desolation into the valley; and that, stigmatising him as an ungrateful treacherous renegade, he had forbidden his wife or daughters ever again to exchange a word with him, and had driven him in anger from his roof. What Squire Rutherford really knew regarding this matter, or how he had made his discoveries, Peter was unable to state; but both he and his wife, with many headshakings, expressed themselves well satisfied of the truth of the accusation, giving as their reason for so

being, that, for some months past, they had noticed Walter riding frequently in the direction of Ridgwood Manor, and that of late he had passed and repassed the hamlet daily, either upon foot or horseback. By the time all this intelligence had been interchanged, and the comments it naturally called forth made, it was getting somewhat late in the day. Feeling anxious to deliver his letter without further delay, Nicholas accordingly bade his friends good-bye—Peter accompanying him as far as the avenue leading to Hall-i'-th'-Wood, where in passing he designed to call, in order, as he said, that he might pay his respects to Squire Rutherford and his family. Half an hour afterwards the released prisoner was once again upon his way to Erleston Grange, having now for companion Squire Rutherford, with whom he was conversing in earnest tones. And far into the night they two and Sir John Anderton sat together round a fire, suggesting, discussing, and finally coming to a resolution respecting a certain subject broached in William's letter, which the Baronet read aloud to his companions, and concerning which Weston carried also a few verbal messages.

As the readiest way of explaining what was the subject referred to, and of giving, besides, an outline of William Anderton's adventures since, some three months back, he had left Waradale, with the intent of proceeding shortly to Rheims, and there commencing his studies for the priesthood, we will transcribe the letter in question, which is of no great length. It ran as follows :

‘ Most dear and loving Father,—For some while past I have been diligently seeking a trusty messenger whereby I might send you tidings concerning myself, and also discover unto you and Squire Rutherford a proposition which, I trust, may commend itself to your best considerations. And when I was almost on the point to despair in this my

search, I had the good fortune to meet the bearer, who will apprise you where and in what manner we chanced upon one another. Now, therefore, in as few words as possible—for the good Nicholas can supply to you all that lacketh of my fulness—I will relate what hath befallen me since our parting, and so explain to you how it happeneth that I am still in England, whereat, I wot, you will be in some amaze. Upon quitting Waradale I proceeded straightway to Manchester, and, in obedience to your direction, sweet my father, sought to gain access to Master Ashworth.

‘This, howbeit, the governor of the gaol denied me, affirming that, by reason that some ropes and other instruments for to aid in their escape had been of late conveyed to certain priests by their friends, he was purposed to admit none to visit his prisoners. But not willing to take this refusal, I was minded to shake his resolve; and to that end I presented myself day after day at the Fleet, and repeated my request for to be granted entrance thereto. At length, growing angered at my importunity, the governor threatened that if I did but once come there again he would of a verity have me into the prison, and that in such a fashion that I should not easily be letten out again—certifying that he recked well that I was myself an obstinate Papist and after no good. Whereupon, seeing that by further perseverance I could not gain my ends, but was like to bring myself into trouble, I turned my back on Manchester, and so came to Liverpool. And being gotten here, I made inquiries, and found that a merchant vessel was to set sail on the next morning after for Havre de Grace, wherein, being desirous to get to France as soon as I might, I made application for a passage. This the captain, having looked at me, as I thought, very curiously, and asked me divers questions—as what was my name, where did I come from, and what design had I in leaving

the country: the which questions I made shift to answer prudently—professed himself willing to accord; and our bargain being struck, he very civilly, as it seemed to me, walked back with me to my inn. In about an hour afterwards, howbeit, I was seized by the officers and carried before a justice of the peace on suspicion of being a priest, the merchant having, it seemed, gone to him and accused me of being such. And notwithstanding my youth, which made it unlike that the imputation should be true, and my stout refutation thereof, I was detained at my own charges in his house by the space of two whole months, at the end of which time, being satisfied at length that I was but a layman, they set me at large. And now, despite my anxiety to be gone, I feared to apply for passage in any ship whereof I knew not beforehand somewhat of the captain's dispositions. But using caution on the point, I presently became acquainted with a most excellent young man, who was master of a trading brig which sailed betwixt Liverpool and divers towns on the coast of Normandy, and who promised to take me on board his vessel, and to land me at any place on that coast I should choose, if so were I could wait a week, before which time he would not be ready to depart. I, of course, signified my willingness to do so, and in the interim there sprang up betwixt us quite a close friendship; and he having made known to me that he was a Catholic, I confided to him my purpose of going to Rheims in order to be made priest. Whereupon he told me that, although he had not himself any vocation to the priesthood, he was wishful to serve God according to his ability, and that one of his chiefest motives in taking up the profession of seaman had been the opportunity that it would give him of being serviceable to the cause of religion by carrying over priests who were sent upon the mission to England, and also of aiding such to escape thence as were in danger from the laws. And to that intent he farther informed me

he had caused the brig, whereof he is sole owner, to be constructed with a false bottom; and in a secret hold thereof hath already fetched across to this country many seminary priests, and also conveyed out of it sundry laymen, with their families, who desired to fly from persecution. Now upon his making mention of this last particular, my thoughts, sweet my father, flew swiftly to Waradale, and I began to consider how desirable a thing it were that you and our dear friends the Rutherfords should, if so be it could be done, sell your houses and estates, and get out of this our unhappy land ere the ruin, which must of necessity overtake you if you remain herein, had already come upon you. And when, noting the silence whereinto I had fallen whilst cogitating this matter, the young captain (whose name I deem it safer not to set down in this letter) would know the reason thereof, I showed him the workings of my mind. And manifesting extraordinary kind interest in the concernment, he thereupon certified me that there were in and about the town many men of wealth who, he believed, would be willing to bargain for the properties, and bade me urge you to essay forthwith to make secret disposal thereof, and thereafter to escape to Normandy in his vessel, where, quoth he, you would find many pleasant spots wherein to fix your abode, good living at a cheap rate, and, above all, liberty to practise your holy religion without fear or molestation. So now, good father, I would earnestly implore of you to follow out this worthy captain's advice; for consider, I pray you, that whereas by cleaving to your native country and the house wherein our forefathers have dwelt for generations (though I wot well they be most dear unto you) you are in continual hazard of imprisonment, and are sure, in the end, to meet with ruin, you may, by now giving heed thereto, save that which is lawfully your own, and so be able to end your days in comfort, though, sooth to say, in a foreign land. Advise

therefore, beseech you, with Squire Rutherford and his family, and do you, with those true friends and my sweet sister and poor mother, come hither as speedily as may be. Nicholas will apprise you where you may meet with Captain ——, who hopeth to be returned from his next voyage by the second week of April, and will acquaint you moreover with several safe places of concealment where, if it be necessary, you may for a time abide.

‘Now as regards Father Christopher, I hope that good man will accompany you hither, inasmuch as that after your departure thence there would be no manner of security for him in Waradale. From hence he can, if he list, betake himself to some other part of England—for that he will not quit his labouring in this quarter of the Lord’s vineyard. I am well assured; nor would I have him so to do, seeing that the Master hath hired him to the work. The surest place for him, peradventure, would be the house of the lady—the same where I fell in with Nicholas Weston, and whither I was first taken by my friend the captain. My knowledge of those other hiding-places in Catholic dwellings hereabouts which I have communicated to my good messenger, I owe likewise to this estimable gentleman; for a gentleman he is most truly, being a good clerk, and withal very rich. God having prospered him as he well deserveth. He cometh, moreover, of an excellent family by the mother’s side, who is an Englishwoman. His father is French, and these his parents, together with a younger brother and sister, dwell in a pleasant and spacious mansion situate betwixt the town of Dieppe and a small village called St. Nicolas, which lieth hard thereby.

‘The father followeth a trade or occupation, whereby he hath already gathered a great fortune, the which, being yet in the prime of life, and, as his son affirmeth, of a stout and active disposition, he is like still to increase. Of the nature of that trade, howbeit, or of aught else

touching this my new but most dear friend, I will not by these presents inform you, not being willing farther to lengthen my letter; and hoping, from the bottom of my heart, that you may ere long be yourself acquainted with him. And now, sweet my father, fare you well. Be persuaded to do as I have said, and send me word so soon as you be resolved concerning this matter. Two days hence I shall, I trust, be on my way to Rheims, whither I yearn greatly to be, so as that I may begin to prepare myself for my blessed calling. Commend me heartily to Kate and all my dearest friends, and assist me, my father, by your good prayers, whereof I stand always in need.

‘Your son in all affection,

‘WILLIAM ANDERTON.’

CHAPTER XXV.

‘UNEARTHED AT LAST!’

As we have before observed, the fine of 20*l.* (250*l.* in present value) exacted every four weeks, or thirteen times a year, required an ample fortune to meet. An expedient, however, for lightening the terrible burden had been resorted to by many among the wealthier recusants, which had met with some success. This was to induce the Queen, through the intercession of one of her favourites, to accept a yearly composition in place of the regular monthly amercement; and having heard that petitions to this effect had been granted, Sir John Anderton and Squire Rutherford had made application for a like indulgence. But in their cases, owing to the fact that neither could command sufficient interest with the popular party, and that such arrangements were altogethor obnoxious to the chiefs of the Established Church, it had been refused. As William had said in his letter, therefore, there lay before our two families the certain prospect of pecuniary ruin; and already Squire Rutherford had begun to experience difficulty in raising money to satisfy the demand. The knowledge, however, that in order to do so he would shortly be compelled to part with a portion of his estate, though this weighed upon him heavily enough, was not, at present, the predominant trouble in the poor Squire's mind. Upon first becoming cognisant of his stepson's defection from the faith, his wrath and indignation had fully equalled his grief, and he had, as we have seen, acting on impulse,

driven the young man from his roof. But for two reasons he now greatly regretted the step into which this natural irascibility of temper had precipitated him. One of these reasons was that the severity had occasioned his wife extreme distress, and the other, that upon calm reflection he perceived it to have been most imprudent and dangerous, since, out of revenge for his banishment, Walter might, if he chose, betray Father Christopher, and so bring destruction upon his friend Sir John Anderton, and upon himself also, as an aider and abettor of the good priest's concealment. His fears upon this score the kind-hearted Squire, not wishing to add to their trouble, had concealed from his family; but he had spoken of them freely to the Baronet, whose alarm was proportionately greater than his own as his nature was less sanguine.

It was whilst affairs were in this state—when the pressure of the forfeiture for non-attendance at church was becoming unbearable, and perils from the above-mentioned and other sources were closing thickly around—that William's letter arrived; and the counsel it contained, rendered practicable by the suggestion of means for carrying it out, commended itself highly to the respective heads of the Erleston Grange and Hall-i'-th'-Wood households.

Consulted on the day following its reception, Father Christopher expressed his entire approbation of the scheme; and his opinion finding eager support with the ladies, it was accordingly resolved that an attempt should forthwith be made to put it into execution; and that to this end Sir John and the Squire should, on the succeeding Monday, accompany Nicholas Weston on his return to Liverpool, and there, if possible, enter into preliminaries for disposing by contract of their houses, lands, and furniture. In order, however, to guard against the frustration of their purpose through its becoming known to the authorities by any incaution on the part of others, it was decided that,

that no strangers should be admitted, no outsider or member of other family should be admitted to share in the service. But among those who did participate in it there were, as may be understood, many discussions held, on this the day after Weston's reappearance in the valley; and much joyful excitement, especially amongst the more fervent persons, was experienced in the prospect of once more enjoying religious liberty and freedom from surveillance and persecution, secured, however, by sadness on William Witherby's account, and uncertainty as to the success of the enterprise. With these hopes and fears still agitating their minds, though doubtless they strove for the time being to banish them thence, our friends assembled next morning for Mass at the usual early hour, and with the customary caution and secrecy. The hour was early indeed, being 2 A.M., and the weather so dark and tempestuous that little Agnes Rutherford, much to her distress, had been obliged to remain at home. Most of the other inmates of Hall-i'-th'-Wood were, however, present, as was also the entire household of the Grange, with the exception of Lady Anderton, a maid who watched her slumbers, and a gray-headed butler, who kept a small postern-door by which admittance was granted on the giving of a certain password, known only to the Catholics of the neighbourhood. The rest of the company thus gathered by stealth to assist in a private house, and at the risk of severe punishment, at that now proscribed worship, which had awhile been celebrated in every cathedral and church throughout the land, consisted of peasant men and women, some of whom had walked considerable distances over bleak snow-clad hills and in a driving sleet. Yet not a discontented or unhappy face was to be seen in that upper chamber of Erleston Grange, the windows of which were carefully shrouded with heavy drapery, in order to prevent the light within from being visible without. On the contrary, the

pervading expression of the little assembly was one of joyous expectancy, mingled with deep solemnity; for the danger and difficulty attending its enjoyment had but served to render their holy religion, with its august services, more precious than heretofore to these its true and faithful professors.

Before commencing the Mass, Father Christopher, as was his wont, addressed a few earnest words of instruction and encouragement to his small flock, choosing for text upon this occasion these appropriate words, taken from the epistle of the day: 'Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. But as then he that was born according to the flesh persecuted him that was after the spirit, so also is it now.' And having, as the lesson to be drawn therefrom, exhorted his hearers to bear with joy and patience tribulations which marked them as children of God, and to forgive and pity those who inflicted them, the good priest now approached the altar, which altar, furnished in readiness for the Holy Sacrifice, stood within the secret chamber opening from the room which had formerly belonged to William Anderton. Gathering as closely as possible in front of the aperture formed by the drawing back of the panel, the worshippers accordingly placed themselves upon their knees, causing, as they did so, a little unavoidable bustle. This having, however, quickly subsided, a deep silence fell upon the room, broken only by the sound of the wind and of a heavy rain, into which the sleet had now changed, pelting against the shrouded casements; and with a sense of security stealing over them as they listened to the storm which raged without, all present addressed themselves to join in the sacred rite then beginning.

Meanwhile, out in that pelting rain, a band of some dozen armed men, who had alighted from horseback at the entrance to the grounds, were swiftly approaching the

Grange, one of whom, who walked in the front ranks and carried a lantern, seemed to be slightly under the influence of drink, and was swearing horribly. By the light which shone upwards upon his face he was to be recognised as our acquaintance Justice Windwood; and as the party neared the house, an individual, who kept pace with him on the right hand, administered, for the third time since entering the glen, a timid reproof for his bad language.

'Tut, tut, Sir Paul,' was the reply, spoken in a gruff surly voice. 'Prithee keep thy preaching for thy pulpit, man. 'Twould make any one but a Calvinist parson swear to be out i' such a night; and by Zeus I'll make them pay for 't, who have brought me upon the journey. But come, my pretty son, where lieth the door you spoke of?'

'This way, good sir,' returned the young man addressed, stepping forward from his place on the Justice's left side and taking the lead. 'But tread softly, beseech you, or we shall be heard.'

Repeating the above injunction to his followers and pausing for a moment to darken his lantern, Master Windwood picked his way upon tiptoe at the heels of his younger companion, until, arrived at a few paces from the postern-door previously referred to, the latter stopped short, and, pressing his hand above his heart, as though to quiet its palpitation, said, in an eager unsteady whisper, 'O, by all that's sacred, certify me once more, good sir, that you will give her to me, an' I do it!'

'Ay, ay, will I, my lad. You shall be wed 'fore the month is out, trust me,' muttered the Justice, in response.

'And you will spare my mother and the other ladies?' queried the former speaker.

'I'll take none but the priest and the other two you wot of. But I be not used, Master Willoughby, to break

promises, nor to brook a doubt o' my word neither. So prithee lead on, good fellow, and keep us no longer i' this villanous rain.'

Stifling a groan which had risen to his lips, and wringing his hands in the darkness, Walter Willoughby, suffering already, in anticipation of the act he was about to commit, from remorse of conscience, advanced towards the door and knocked gently upon it.

A voice from within immediately inquired who was there; and in a low purposely disguised tone the wretched traitor gave the password, '*Ave Maria Sanctissima*.'

Apparently not altogether satisfied, the porter demanded it again; but upon its being repeated more distinctly, he drew back the fasteners, and unclosed the door. Perceiving, however, by the faint glimmer of a rushlight, which burned upon an adjacent stand, what appeared to him, in the semi-darkness, to be a great crowd of strange faces, he instantly struggled to re-shut it, uttering the while a loud warning cry. But, as a matter of course, his efforts proved vain; and, in another moment, he was overpowered and gagged, and guided by Walter, pale and trembling with shame and misery, the pursuivants were creeping up the staircase.

Their hope, howbeit, of surprising their intended victims in the act of celebrating and being present at Mass, was doomed to disappointment; for, happily, the door-keeper's admonitory cry had been heard. Upon reaching the chamber to which they were conducted, they found the door to be locked. To break it open was a matter of time (its strength and thickness being much greater than that of our modern doors), and to Anthony Windwood—to judge from his expletives of annoyance—a considerable trial of patience. But at length the task was accomplished. The door gave way with a crash; and the pursuivants found themselves in the chamber, but in

total darkness. Again, as had been foreseen, time was occupied in the procuring of a light. When this had been obtained, it was seen that the secret chamber was closed, and that, though the rest of the little gathering remained within it, Father Christopher, Sir John, and Squire Rutherford had disappeared from the room.

Commanding his men to guard the door, and for the present to suffer no one to pass, Master Windwood—somewhat peremptorily, for he was much out of humour—now requested Walter to point out the concealed spring. Amidst hisses of contempt from the more humble Catholics, and a silence of grief and horror on the part of his relatives and friends, the young man—avoiding the gaze of all, and showing in his face the confusion and reluctance he felt—advanced to obey the mandate.

A further delay of some minutes was occasioned by his professing a difficulty in finding the spring, and attended by an increase of Justice Windwood's impatience and irritation. But at last Walter laid his finger upon a certain spot of the carved wood-work, and, in obedience to his touch, the panel slid aside.

His spirits rising in the near prospect of capturing his long-desired prey, the amiable functionary then, seizing the light held by one of his servants, and addressing some jocular remark to its supposed occupants, sprang into the tiny apartment, closely followed by Sir Paul Cunningham. A loud oath announced his disappointment at finding it empty, interrupted, however, by an exclamation of satisfaction, as, on the succeeding instant, his eye lighted upon a hole in the floor at its farther corner. But upon stepping towards this, and perceiving that it gave upon a bare staircase with a closed door at the foot, his fury knew no bounds. Turning upon Walter, who stood quaking in his rear, he passionately accused him of having intentionally deceived him by omitting to mention the staircase, and

swore not only to rescind all his promises, but to punish him into the bargain for the scurvy trick.

Alarmed at the idea of losing his madly-coveted reward, Walter eagerly assured the Justice that, although he had so often seen the secret chamber open for Mass, and knew where the hidden spring was situated, he had only once been within the interior, and that the existence of the staircase had almost slipped his memory, adding besides that he had expected the surprise to be so sudden as to allow no time for any attempt at escape either on the part of Father Christopher or any of the assistants at Mass. Long before he had concluded this apologetic explanation, the incensed Justice was at the foot of the rough steps impatiently examining the handleless door; and now, rudely ordering Walter, who had followed him, to hold his peace, he bade him make amends for his carelessness by showing the way to open it. This, however, the young man dejectedly confessed himself unable to do; but, informing Master Windwood that the passage communicated with the chapel, he suggested that they should hasten round to the ordinary entrance of the latter, and so, perhaps, entrap their intended victims within it. The proposal commending itself to the mind of the worthy Justice, it was forthwith acted upon. Leaving a few of his well-armed men still to keep guard upon the chamber he quitted, he, with Sir Paul Cunningham, the clergyman's factotum Abraham Taylor, and the rest of his own servants, followed Walter Willoughby down the staircase they had ascended, and round by a short passage to the chapel-door. Arrived thereat, Walter drew back a little, and, pushing past him, Master Windwood seized the handle and turned it. But, finding that the door would not open by this means, he stooped to look in at the key-hole, and immediately announced, in a triumphant tone, that it was locked upon the inside, and that he believed,

therefore, that those of whom they were in search were within. The surmise proved to be at least partially correct; for upon effecting by violence the entrance which had not been granted on demand, Sir John Anderton and Squire Rutherford were descried standing beneath an open window in the little channel. Heaped below this window, which was placed high in the wall, were stools, cushions, and various other objects, apparently arranged for the purpose of enabling some one to mount thereto. As his gaze fell upon the erection, Anthony Windwood drew the deduction which it had been designed that he and his fellow pursuivants should form.

‘What ho, good my masters,’ he exclaimed, laughing coarsely, ‘so you’ve been helping the Jesuit fox to get away, have you? And you think, belike, he will now escape our clutches? Ha, ha! beshrew you for a couple of fools! We’ll have him back here in a trice, I’ll be sworn.’ And, turning to his followers, he pursued: ‘Hie you hence, my men, with all haste, and beat well about the grounds; and if you find not the priest therein take horse and pursue him. And, hark you, if you hunt him down within the hour you shall have five marks each to drink to his speedy execution, and to make merry withal this evening.’

‘Nay, stay, I pray you, Master Windwood; suffer the men to tarry a moment,’ observed Sir Paul Cunningham, in his customary calm and deliberate accents. ‘’Twere better, methinks, first to search this apartment; for it hath been borne into my mind that the opening of that window, and the placing of the things thereunder, may haply be naught but a cunningly devised trick.’

‘Perdition! conceit you so?’ cried the Justice, in surprise. ‘Odsbody, we’ll soon make discovery, an that be true. Go to, good fellows; pull down the tapestry and examine the walls behind. Perchance there may be

another hiding-hole somewhere. But where is Master Willoughby?' he demanded, suddenly glancing round. 'Marry, 'twill go hard with him if he have indeed practised deception upon me.'

'But that have I not, worthy sir,' protested Walter, coming forward from behind the chapel-door, where he had until now remained, and crimsoning violently in the consciousness that he was beneath his stepfather's gaze. 'I am well-assured there is no further place o' concealment in the house. The priest must have got away by the window.'

'Well, we will after him anon, if it be so, my pretty youth,' replied the Justice. 'But, as Sir Paul counsels, we will first make sure that he is not here. Come, show your zeal in the good cause, and aid us i' the search.'

Too anxious concerning the result of the investigation even to address a syllable of reproach to their unhappy betrayer, Sir John and the Squire stood by, whilst the walls of the chapel were stript of the tapestry hangings, which covered a considerable portion of them, and which had been the work of successive generations of the ladies of the family, and whilst the altar was broken up, and a valuable painting which hung above it wantonly destroyed.

But at length, swearing at the clouds of dust which had been raised by this laudable occupation, Justice Windwood declared himself satisfied that there was no 'lurking-hole' in the chapel, and that the 'fox' had really 'broken cover' and got away through the window, and was beginning to upbraid Sir Paul Cunningham with the delay his suggestion had occasioned in the pursuit, when that gentleman, who, whilst his companion had been speaking, had been engaged in pushing with his foot at the carpeting of the sanctuary steps which had got disarranged in the commotion, suddenly gave utterance to an ejaculation of excitement.

‘How now! what is’t, good friend, what is’t?’ inquired Master Windwood, with an entire change of tone, approaching with alacrity, and bending to look where the clergyman’s long finger pointed.

Echoing with beating hearts the inquiry, ‘What is it?’ Sir John Anderton and Squire Rutherford also drew near, and peered over the shoulders of the pursuivants, who were crowding eagerly around. To their horror they then perceived that either, in their hurry and alarm, they had neglected to fit the stone which gave entrance to the vault properly into its place, or that it had subsequently slipped back beneath the tramping of the men, for between it and the upper step there was now visible a tolerably wide chink.

A groan from the Baronet, and a shout of delight from Master Windwood, greeted, a few moments afterwards, the disclosure of the so-long-carefully-kept secret. And, chuckling with gratification, the Justice insisted, with simulated politeness, upon shaking hands with Father Christopher, who now emerged from the vault where, as the reader will have guessed, he had all the time been concealed.

Without a shadow of fear or discomposure upon his face, the good man yielded his hand to the priest-hunter, and courteously thanked him for having taken such pains about his discovery, seeing, as he added, that his capture would in all probability lead to a speedy martyrdom.

‘Ay, certes, noble sir, an ’twill do you a pleasure, we shall doubtless be able shortly to furnish you with a halter,’ sneered Master Windwood. ‘And these brave gentlemen, too, who have had the honour of harbouring and succouring you, sweet sir, they shall likewise, trust me, enjoy ere long a dance at the rope’s end, though peradventure,’ he subjoined, glancing at Sir John and the

Squire, 'they may not be so keenly alive to the honour and privilege thereof as your good saintship.'

Reminded by this agreeable speech of the facts that he had for a moment overlooked, viz. that, through having entertained him in his house, Sir John Anderton had incurred equal danger with himself, and that, by concealing his knowledge that he was in the neighbourhood, attending Mass, and endeavouring to assist his escape, Squire Rutherford had rendered himself liable to at least a *præmunire*, Father Christopher's countenance fell, and, stretching forth his hands to his friends, he implored them to pardon him for having involved them in his own destruction. Any further expression, however, of his regret or distress upon this score was quickly interrupted by the two gentlemen, who, coming over to his side, seized each a hand, and, with an earnestness which evidenced their sincerity, declared that, so far from repenting of anything they had done for him, they would only too willingly repeat the offence, and that, rather than now in any way compromise their faith, they should, they trusted, be ready to die for it.

In these assurances, to the good Father's surprise, the usually timid Sir John Anderton manifested equal fervour with his friend ; and notwithstanding that his danger was unquestionably greater than that of the Squire, his demeanour, if any comparison could be admitted, was calmer and more self-possessed.

The sight of his victim's composure modified, in some degree, Master Windwood's satisfaction, and, resuming his brusque manner, he now gave orders that the little company of recusants, temporarily confined above stairs, should be brought down to the dining-hall, to which apartment he adjourned with his three prisoners and the rest of the pursuivants. This having been done, the names of all were carefully registered in Sir Paul Cunning-

ham's pocket-book; and they were then, after being severely threatened by the Justice, and assured that he should henceforth keep a watchful eye upon them, commanded to return to their own homes.

To this behest, however, the poor people, who had gathered around the three captives to bewail and lament their seizure, paid at the first no attention, and it was only obeyed eventually when enforced at the point of the sword. But although thus ignominiously expelled from the house where a short time before they had been worshipping God in fancied security, the afflicted Catholics did not at once disperse for their own homes. Collected about the entrance to the park, they waited with anxious and sorrowful hearts to bid farewell (a farewell which they had every reason to believe would be, as indeed it proved, a lasting one) to the holy priest, who during the past ten months had been their joy and consolation, their instructor, adviser, and best friend; and to the two gentlemen who, as lords of the manor, had ever held to the simple inhabitants of the valley much the same relationship as that of good old feudal chieftains to their devoted retainers.

Meanwhile, within the walls they had just quitted, a parting naturally more heartrending than that for which they waited was taking place. Having noticed, on following to the door those whom he had caused to be chased from the house, that the rain had now ceased, and that the morning was already dawning, the worthy Justice of the Peace, returning to the dining-hall, announced his intention of at once setting off for Ridgwood Manor, and bade his prisoners prepare for instant departure. A scene almost too affecting for description followed this announcement. Kate clung about her father's neck, with white cheeks and lips quivering with agony, yet struggling hard to hide her own suffering that she might not add to his;

whilst, strained in the Squire's embrace, Mistress Rutherford and Helen sobbed aloud the tearless sobs of breaking hearts:

Scarcely a word was exchanged upon either side, for the sorrow was too sharp and bitter for speech. Only as Master Windwood (irritated by a sight which, in spite of himself, touched his feelings) again and again commanded them to cut short the adieus, the anguish-stricken relatives clung the closer. But at length, menaced by forcible separation, they tore themselves apart with a silent lingering pressure of lips and hands.

Then the captives were led away, Father Christopher bestowing his parting benediction upon the weeping servants, who had crowded to the door, and praying the God of the widow and fatherless to comfort and watch over the three ladies, who now stood together upon the steps, clasping each other's hands, and speaking with their eyes the sad farewells their parched throats refused to utter.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE REWARD OF TREACHERY.

NOTWITHSTANDING the vile act of treachery and ingratitude of which he had been guilty, Walter Willoughby was not altogether devoid either of religious susceptibility or of natural affection. The truths of Christianity had never indeed so taken possession of his heart and mind as to have become the motive power of his life, but, surrounded by pious influences, he had from childhood believed in, and in a callous indifferent manner practised, his holy religion. And now, spite of his having by word and deed renounced it, he had not in reality lost faith in the Church of his baptism. Within himself, stifled though he might, there existed a witness to the truth, that it, and it only, was the Church of God. Neither, we repeat, was the unhappy young man without natural feeling. His attachment to his mother, though by no means strong, was, so far as it went, sincere, and he had always been accounted a good and dutiful son. In his other relationships, moreover, Walter had in his past life acquitted himself tolerably well. He had never, it is true, manifested much consideration or delicacy of feeling in his intercourse with his family or friends; but he had, whenever his interest did not clash with theirs—and this seldom occurred—habitually rendered himself agreeable. The sweetness of his voice adding to the attractiveness of his naturally suave manners and easy temper, Walter Willoughby had accordingly received upon all hands a large share of

liking; and prevented by the deceitfulness of the human heart from discerning his true character so long as nothing occurred to force it upon his knowledge, he had until lately believed himself to be fully deserving of the esteem and affection with which he was regarded. A year ago, had any one told him that he should one day betray to death a Catholic priest, and bring ruin and misery upon all connected with him by the ties of blood or friendship, he would have laughed the prediction to scorn; and in his indignation there would have been no hypocrisy, as probably there was none in that of Hazael, when, repelling the prophecy of his evil deeds by Eliseus, he asked, 'Is thy servant a dog that he should do these things?' But, concealed beneath the mask of outward amiability, Walter's nature was eminently selfish. Love of God and of his neighbour, though not entirely absent from his heart, were, in comparison with his love of self, as mole-hills to a mountain, and when tried by the touchstone of temptation, he had found himself unable or unwilling to sacrifice his own gratification to a sense of right or duty.

Implicitly conscious from the beginning that his passion for Caroline Windwood could only be indulged in at the expense of conscience and truth, he had nevertheless, after one ineffectual struggle, abandoned himself entirely to that indulgence. Again and again he had visited her in the orchard, growing with each stolen interview more fascinated, more passionately enamoured of her beauty of face and figure, and of the natural or acquired grace of her manner. And yet, even before observation had confirmed the report of his instinct, Walter was aware that she who granted him those secret rapturous meetings was so far from being a noble gracious-souled woman, that she was scarcely even a pure-minded one. The love with which she inspired him was of the earth, earthly. Vaguely

at first, but more explicitly afterwards, he had felt this to be the case. Once even, when—after having lain for an hour at her feet beneath the gnarled apple-tree, laden now with sour green fruit, and with the scent of new-made hay pervading the atmosphere, and adding to the intoxication he had experienced—he was riding homewards, he had frankly admitted to himself this fact, and had gone on to compare in his mind the very different effect which had been produced upon him by an attachment which, just before he had first seen Caroline, he had fancied himself beginning to entertain for Kate Anderton. He had never, as he now congratulated himself, spoken a word to Kate concerning his admiration for her, but he remembered how, whilst under its influence, he had longed to be great and noble and good, in order that he might be worthy of her affection. But when, following up this train of thought, he asked himself which of his two loves he preferred, a smile broke over his face, and by way of answer to the question he drew from his breast the embroidered little glove which he still wore, and pressed upon it long lingering kisses. Ah, could he so have kissed anything *Kate* had worn? He knew well that he could not—that *she* had never stirred his heart to the depths as had the owner of that glove. The emotion which, during his transitory fancy for her, he had felt in Kate's presence resembled that produced by a moonlight scene, full of calm mystical beauty, but silent and cold. In Caroline's company, on the contrary, he basked, as it were, in radiant sunshine, surrounded by a summer landscape filled with light and heat, and alive with the music of singing birds. The moments spent in her society had become to the infatuated youth the mainspring, as it seemed, and centre of his life. Before his periodical visits he lived only in anticipation of them, and after all his happiness consisted in recalling to memory each word or look of his *inamorata*.

His passion, feeding upon itself, had grown until it had filled his whole being, overlying and apparently crushing to death all feebler affections. How, he had learned to wonder in the ardour of his novel experience, could he ever have prized existence before he had known Caroline Windwood; or how could he now endure life were he deprived of intercourse with her! Yet the fear that he might be so deprived, and shortly, had been constantly present to Walter's mind; for although all through the summer the secret meetings had gone on and remained unsuspected, they had always been attended by the risk of discovery, and could not, as he had painfully reflected, be continued for ever. Whilst, however, with the advance of intimacy, his longing for a closer union had waxed stronger and stronger, a shrinking from hazarding his present bliss in the extremely faint hope of adding to it, had increased in proportion. To demand Caroline from her father in marriage had seemed to Walter something like asking for the moon; and he had dreaded even to apprise the Justice of his love, feeling assured that, as the least disastrous consequence, he should be prevented from ever-seeing her again. And in these evil previsions upon the part of her lover, Caroline, notwithstanding that her father had hitherto denied her nothing, and that she knew her influence over him to be almost unbounded, could not avoid in a measure sharing. She had allowed herself therefore to be easily persuaded by Walter to keep their mutual secret as carefully as possible. But at length there had come a time when these interviews, rendered all the sweeter by the insecurity which accompanied their enjoyment, could no longer be held without almost a certainty of detection.

In the autumn of this year—the first of his residence in a neighbourhood abounding with all descriptions of game—Justice Windwood, who (as may have been gathered

from his habit of interlarding his speech with technical phrases) was much attached to field-sports, had invited some half-dozen acquaintances to pay him a visit during the hunting season. The invitation had been accepted, and, as a consequence, Master Windwood had abandoned, *pro tem.*, his daily custom of sleeping away the portion of the afternoon which immediately succeeded his early dinner, thus making it impossible for Caroline to employ that portion with safety as she had been wont. From a motive, moreover, which she had not been slow in divining, the worthy magistrate had insisted also upon his daughter's being constantly in his own company and that of his friends. Each day, Caroline had been obliged to join in the chase, and each evening she had been called upon to contribute, by her lute and voice, to the entertainment of her father's guests—or rather, of *one* of his guests, whom he had contrived to throw into constant association with her. Formerly Caroline would have been ready enough to have seconded her father's designs upon Sir Martin Hope, a fashionable young *roué*, who, in order to recruit his health, impaired by dissipation, had acceded to the Justice's proposal that he should spend a few weeks at Ridgwood Manor. But now the case had been different; for although to possess a titled husband had hitherto been her own ambition, as well as that of her amiable parent on her behalf, what heart Caroline had was undoubtedly given to Walter Willoughby. To Master Windwood's extreme disappointment, she had not only foreborne to encourage the young knight, but when—admiring her beauty and prospective wealth—he did actually propose for her, she had unhesitatingly declined the honour of his hand. Pressed by her father for the reason of this refusal, and freed from the influence of her lover's caution, Caroline had then—trusting to his devoted attachment to herself—acknowledged to the Justice that her affections

were already engaged ; and on his urging her further to name the object of her love, she had ventured to disclose the truth. The result, however, of this avowal proved to be very different from that which she had hoped. For the first time in her life, the furious passion, which Caroline had so often seen her father exhibit towards others, had been directed upon herself ; and so violent was the outburst of his rage that, for the moment, she had been cowed and terrified. But young Mistress Windwood had a spirit worthy of her sire. Speedily recovering her courage, she had sent a message to Walter, warning him to keep out of the Justice's way, and had then set herself to combat—with an obstinacy stronger than his own—her father's decision that she should never be united to the man of her choice.

The plan she had adopted to this end was to shut herself in her own room ; to refuse to hold any communication with her parents, or with the rest of the household ; and also to decline food, excepting such as was barely sufficient to keep herself in life.

And the plan had succeeded ; for although, believing that Caroline would soon abandon this singular line of conduct, Master Winwood had at first held aloof, professing an indifference to her feelings which he was far from experiencing, he had presently grown alarmed at her persistency. And when, by and by, she had become seriously ill, his anger and mortification could no longer remain proof against his passionate affection, and, as she had foreseen, he had given way altogether. Accordingly, sending for Master Willoughby, he, though somewhat ungraciously, offered to accept him as a son-in-law, on the following conditions, first, that the young man should become a Protestant ; and secondly, that he should inform him whether there was any foundation for a suspicion, which Sir Paul Cunningham had lately communicated to him,

viz. that the Jesuit, John Christopher, or some other priest, was in hiding in the valley.

Almost beside himself with joy, Walter had readily complied with the former of these two conditions, for he had long been prepared to sacrifice his religious convictions to his unboly passion. But though, sooth to say, it had, at various times, occurred to him, that by betraying Father Christopher he might render himself acceptable to the priest-hunting magistrate, he had always shuddered at the repulsive suggestion, and now that opportunity was afforded, he could not in cold blood act upon it. Endeavouring, therefore, to throw into his assurances an appearance of sincerity, Walter had denied all knowledge of there being a priest in the vicinity of Waradale, and had been glad to find himself believed by the Justice.

A few days later, however, expelled by his stepfather from his home, smarting beneath the contumelious epithets which had been heaped upon him, and made reckless by the persuasion that he had already, by his pretended conformity, lost the esteem of his friends, the unfortunate youth made his appearance at Ridgwood Manor, and in the heat of his vexation, dropped a hint concerning the true state of the case. The moment afterwards he would have given anything to have recalled his words, but it was then too late. Master Windwood had caught and understood them; and now, threatening him upon the one hand with legal punishment, and with the breaking off of the newly-formed engagement, in the event of his refusing to disclose all he knew, he had promised, on the other, to allow a speedy marriage with Caroline, if Walter would but impart the information he desired.

As a matter of course, the younger proved no match for the elder man; and on the latter's agreeing to protect from evil consequences the ladies of his own and Sir John Anderton's family, Walter had eventually consented to

avail himself of his knowledge of the password in order to introduce the pursuivants into Erleston Grange at the hour of Mass upon the following Sunday.

That he actually redeemed this pledge has been seen ; but, as we have before stated, Walter was not yet lost to all right or natural feeling, and seized with shame and compunction, he fled from the house before the parting scene described in the last chapter. Mechanically taking the direction to Orrleigh, he walked along, in the dim gray light of breaking morning, the river rolling by his side sullen and black, and the dreary stretch of hill and vale, covered with half-melted snow, looking chill and miserable as his own heart. And miserable indeed that was ; for now that he had perpetrated his foul deed, Walter saw, in fuller and truer colours than he had done before, its wickedness, ingratitude, and treachery. Wretched, too, in body, as well as in mind—for in the earlier part of the morning he had been wet through with the rain, and was now shivering with cold—the poor young man felt his passion cooling ; and with a sickening misgiving he began to question with himself whether the reward he had earned at so terrible a cost was, after all, worth the having.

Like the apples of Sodom, fair and beautiful to look upon, but tasting like ashes to the palate, so his love appeared, on this raw March morning, to have lost all its flavour, to have become valueless and insipid. And yet at what a price had he bought its indulgence ! The brand of Cain was upon his brow ; the guilt of Judas stained his soul. He had offended God, violated his conscience, and betrayed to death his best friends. Judgment and eternity stared him in the face, and remorse—the ‘ pain of hell ’—got hold upon him. Bitter truly, during that solitary morning walk, did Walter Willoughby find the wages of sin, and bitterly did he curse the wild passions which had led

to the commission of his crime. But that crime, as he now reflected, was irremediable; no amount of regret could do away with the consequences of it. Almost maddened by this consideration, the wretched young man strode forward, clenching his hands until the nails buried themselves in his flesh; and passing Ridgwood Manor with scarcely a glance, he went on at the same rapid pace until he came to the Sun Inn at Orrleigh.

A maid, who had just risen, gave him admittance by a back door, and shocked by his extreme pallor, tried—after having in vain sought to elicit the reason of his early visit and travel-stained appearance—to persuade him to retire to bed. But Walter was in no mood for rest; his sin lay heavy upon him, and for the time being it had, he felt, ‘murdered sleep.’ What he wanted was to drown his remorse. And with a peevishness engendered of misery, he bade the girl hold her peace, and fetch him a measure of brandy.

The spirit, brought in obedience to this request, removed the chill from his body, and partially dulled the agony of his mind. A repetition of the dose was further effectual to the same end; and by the time Mistress Morley descended to her late breakfast, rosy and well-dressed, Walter Willoughby was sitting by the kitchen-fire in a state of advanced intoxication.

Much astonished at the condition of the young gentleman, whom she knew well, and had never before seen the worse for liquor, Mistress Morley caused a fire to be lighted in her little rush-strewn parlour, and had him conveyed thither and placed upon a comfortably-cushioned settle. But upon her return, some hours later, from morning service at the Rev. Silas Featherstone’s church—whither she had been compelled to accompany her husband—the worthy dame’s feelings with regard to her guest had undergone a considerable change, and had it not been for

Adam's restraining influence, she would have had him turned out of the house—probably even thrown on to the dunghill.

Unconscious, however, of the disgust and contempt in which he was now held by the hostess and others who had heard the report of his infamous morning's work, Walter Willoughby stayed on in the inn, stupefying himself with drink, and in the afternoon, sleeping heavily from its effects. Awakening about four o'clock, somewhat sobered, but with sufficient of the liquid fire still in his veins to add to the excitement produced by a dream he had just had about Caroline, Walter sprang up, determined to cast to the winds such reflections as had occasioned his late misery, and to fight against the remorse which had threatened to rob his recompense of its enjoyment.

Hurriedly bathing his face, rearranging his dress, and paying his score, he accordingly left the tavern, and hastened towards Ridgwood Manor, where, ever since he had been expelled from Hall-i'-th'-Wood, he had, at Master Windwood's invitation, made his home. Learning, upon his arrival there, that Caroline was alone in a small sitting-room, which was her favourite apartment, he at once repaired thither, feeling a little uneasy as to the reception he should meet with after his prolonged and unexplained absence.

Dressed in white and blue—the colours which best suited her exquisite complexion—Caroline was seated on a low stool in front of the fire, the flickering light playing upon her chiselled features, and drawing out the golden tints from her rippling brown hair. On her lap lay an illuminated book from which she was professing to read, and by her side stretched her faithful companion Lion. One glance at the charming picture she made—sitting thus in the early twilight, her light drapery thrown out by a background of dark oaken panelling, and her slight

figure looking quite fairy-like amidst the heavy ebony furniture—brought back, with redoubled force, all Walter's passion.

Still inflamed by his unaccustomed potations, the young man felt his passing regrets and vain repentance vanishing like morning dew at sight of her beauty. Parents and friends, religion and conscience, became as nothing to him now. In her presence the world seemed well lost for love; and throwing himself on the floor by her side, he began to pour forth ardent expressions of admiration and endearment. Caroline, however, repulsed him angrily, giving him a glance from the beautiful violet eyes—which, after the moment of his entrance, she had kept fixed upon her book—that startled and somewhat dismayed him.

Like all narrow selfish natures, the fair damsel was extremely exacting of attention, and the absence of her swain during the whole of this day which she had anticipated spending on his society had greatly annoyed her. For the first time Walter now discovered that his enchantress had a temper, and a strong one. But his passion had made him her slave, and the apologies and excuses which he offered in reply to her accusations of neglect were almost abject in their humility.

For some time Caroline refused to listen to them; but, by and by, Walter could see that she was lending a more willing ear to his honeyed phrases. Persevering, therefore, in his passionate declarations of devotion, he presently succeeded in mollifying her anger so far as to gain possession of the ringed little hand. As he held her hand in his, a sudden pain struck Walter's heart. Was it a natural fear, or was it a presentiment of that which was to come, that made the poor traitor murmur, with trembling eagerness,

‘O my Caroline! my sweet! my treasure! thou art

dearer to me than aught in heaven or on earth. I have sacrificed my family, denied my religion, perchance even lost my soul, for thee. O, be faithful to me, my Caroline, be faithful to me—be faithful to me !

Faithful to him ! Pitiful cry, coming from the faithless Christian, the faithless son, brother, friend. Did Walter Willoughby deserve to find faith in any relationship of life ? Would he find it, in spite of his deserts ? Or would the Scripture promise or threat—‘ With what measure ye meet, it shall be measured to you again ’—be fulfilled in his case ?

Not this evening, at any rate, did there seem any prospect of retribution ; for when, presently, he and Caroline were summoned to supper, Walter’s present little world appeared all smiles and sunshine. A room well lighted and warmed, a table spread with all the luxuries of the season, greeted his sight. The Justice—exhilarated by his satisfactory morning’s work, the anticipation of his nightly carouse, and the restored health and happiness of his daughter—was in unwontedly high spirits.

Passing, with a joke, over Walter’s disappearance from the Grange, and subsequent failure to present himself at the Manor House, he treated the young man with a condescending kindness and urbanity which he had never before displayed towards him. Walter, indeed, though, as a matter of course, pleased by it, felt at first quite at a loss to understand the new complaisance of his proposed father-in-law. After a few glasses of wine, however, the amiable magistrate disclosed a project he had conceived, which, as Walter felt, explained in some degree the change in his regard, since, could it be carried out, he would be rendered a less undesirable match for Caroline. This project, which was far from being as gratifying to himself as to his informant, was, that through his interest with higher authorities, Justice Windwood should endeavour

to obtain for him, as a reward for his treachery, the mansion and estates of Hall-i'-th'-Wood.

Until this proposition was unfolded to him, Walter had not realised the fact that, as a part of the regular statutory punishment for their offences, the entire property of his stepfather, as well as that of Sir John Anderton, would be confiscated to Government; and as he now did so, the question, what would become of his mother and sisters, obtruded itself upon him with unpleasant force. But though, for a moment, he turned pale, and felt himself growing sick at contemplation of the additional unthought-of suffering his vile act had entailed upon his relatives, Walter soon shook off the distress this occasioned him. He had, he told himself, endured misery enough for one day, and the fresh calamity would not, he was glad to know, fall just yet, since, as the Justice assured him, the ladies would, until after the trial, be left in undisturbed possession of their abodes. So he resolved to banish this and all other unhappy subjects of thought, to forget his old friends, his past life, and to enjoy himself this evening with his beloved. And in a measure he succeeded in the endeavour; for the hardening of heart which attends unrepented sin had already commenced, and though the worm of conscience still gnawed within him, its pain was no longer unendurable.

After supper Caroline sang and played upon her lute, he sitting close by her side, and her father looking smilingly on, and imbibing as he listened. Nothing occurred to disturb the equanimity of the evening, for the Justice extended affability even to his wife. And Mistress Windwood, perhaps in return for his unaccustomed kindness, was more than ordinarily attentive to her husband. In the matter of filling up his glass especially, the good lady was very obliging; and as again and again she pressed the spirits upon him, he beamed upon her in drunken

l-humour, remarking that, 'by Jove,' *he thought* they
ed 'a happy party.' Walter Willoughby echoed the
iment. Yet, above stairs, in the room wherein Father
tland and Rupert Ashworth had formerly been con-
l, were three prisoners, sitting in the dark, thinking
e loved ones from whom they had that morning been
rated, and trying to look forward with courage and
gnation to the cruel death which they believed to be
iting them. And one of these had taken Walter when
ost an infant to his home, had educated and brought
up, and, though bound to him by no ties of blood-
uity, had cared for and loved him as his own child !

CHAPTER XXVII.

HUSBAND AND WIFE.

THE unusually heavy potations in which Justice Windwood had indulged over-night caused him to awake on the following morning with a slight headache, and in a very bad humour. The hour too, as he perceived upon consulting his watch, was later than that at which he was accustomed to rise, and Mistress Windwood, who, on account of her constitutional delicacy of health, generally kept her bed longer than he, was already up and partially dressed.

These facts appeared to annoy him exceedingly; and rating his wife almost without intermission, and in very abusive language, for not having aroused him earlier, he hurried on his clothing, and before she had completed her toilet, was ready to leave the room. Then growling out, for the twentieth time, a complaint that he should be later in setting out for Manchester with his prisoners than he had intended to be, he took up a bunch of keys which lay upon a small table by his bedside, and hastily quitted the apartment.

No sooner had the door closed behind him than Mistress Windwood—who, though her husband had failed to observe it, was very pale, and who had been trembling with a nervousness which greatly hindered her in the process of dressing—sank upon her knees, and, burying her face within her hands, seemed to be engaged in earnest prayer. Presently, crossing herself devoutly, she arose,

still looking pale, but with a smile upon her lips and an expression of serenity in her countenance to which it had for long years been a stranger, and which lent to it quite a new beauty. With fingers which no longer trembled, she then proceeded to brush out and coil the long masses of her hair—not golden-brown hair, like Caroline's, but dark, and streaked in places with gray—and had just donned the last article of her attire, when she heard her husband's footsteps rapidly returning towards the chamber. A momentary quiver shook her frame, but again signing herself with the sacred symbol of Redemption, she opened a drawer, and was apparently occupied in rearranging its contents when he entered. Shutting the door, he reached her side with a few hasty strides, and grasping her arm just above the elbow, stood looking down upon her in silence, and tightening his grip until the pain drew from her a sharp cry. That cry, instead of causing him to relax his hold, seemed rather to stimulate his ferocity, and, still without speaking, he commenced to shake her violently to and fro, whilst at the same he administered with his foot a brutal kick. Glancing up at him then for the first time, Mistress Windwood saw that her husband's face was livid with rage, and that his eyes gleamed with an intensity of passion which, accustomed though she was to his ungovernable tempers, startled and terrified her.

‘O Anthony!’ she exclaimed, shrinking from him, ‘prithee unhand me; you are hurting me sorely.’

‘Hurting you, am I?’ he repeated, with a sneer. ‘Be-shrew me, but I’ll hurt you more, ere I’ve done with you!’ Then bending nearer, he inquired, in a low tone of concentrated fury, ‘How dared you, madam, let go my prisoners?’

Mistress Windwood raised her hand to his, and tried gently to release herself from his vice-like grip, but made no reply to this question; and increasing the pressure of

his cruel fingers until she moaned again in physical agony, he reiterated, 'How dared you, madam, let go my prisoners? How dared you let go the vile traitors? Didst think to remain unsuspect? didst think to escape punishment? But you'll find yourself mista'en i' that notion.' Then pausing for a moment to renew the savage shaking, he added, 'Speak, woman—when didst do it? How long have the fellows been gone?'

'Nay, Anthony,' returned Mistress Windwood deprecatingly, when a slight relaxation of her husband's hold permitted her to reply, 'if the gentlemen be indeed, as you say, gone, you can have no proof that 'twas *I* set them at liberty. The door of our chamber was not bolted in the night-time. You neglected to secure it last e'en. 'Twere, therefore, an easy matter for others in the house to have possessed themselves of your keys.'

'O, you would prevaricate with me, would you, madam?' snarled the enraged Justice. 'Sdeath! 'twere best not. For, hark me, I know well that 'twas *you*, and none other, that played me this scurvy trick. Master Willoughby had naught to do with it. I went straight to his chamber on discovering that the gaol-birds had flown, and am convict thereof. And for the servants—faith! not one o' them durst ha' done it for his life. No, 'twas *you*, 'twas *you*, my fair dame, and you shall smart for 't. You think, belike, that I have been blind all this while to your perverse inclinations; but, trust me, I am no bat. I have long seen, sweet mistress, that you were at heart a rebel and recusant, and were you ten times my wife I would now deliver you up to justice. You have lost me a fair sum of money, madam, that I should have gained by this capture, besides the credit on 't, and, 'fore Heaven, you shall suffer for 't. O, you smile, forsooth,' he added, observing the fact with an access of fury. 'You'll not smile, I warrant, when you feel the hands o' the hangman about your neck.'

But come,' he resumed, after an instant's silence, 'inform me straightway what possessed you to commit this mad action. Confess to 't, woman, confess to 't; and tell me at what hour you let the vermin loose, and whither they have gone, so that I may after them. I shall perchance, yet overtake and recapture them. Quick, madam; certify me how long have they been departed !'

Mistress Windwood pleaded once more, before replying to his question, to be relieved from the bodily torture to which her husband was subjecting her; and on the prayer being granted, she retired from him a few paces, and leaning over the back of a chair which she had drawn between them, stood for some seconds buried in meditation. Then raising her head, and regarding the angry and impatient man with an expression of calm resolution, she said,

'I *will* confess, Anthony, to that you accuse me of, for in truth it *was* I who let go those guiltless men; and I thank God for 't, my husband, in that their blood will not now lie upon your head. For my own sake also, I bless Him, a thousand and a thousand times o'er, that I did it; and had I known yestere'en that I should ha' died for 't to-day, I should still have done 't. And, Anthony, should you, as you threaten, now deliver me up to the law, I shall, I trust, joyfully shed my blood for this action, which, 'i sooth, I count to be the best of my life. Moreover, my husband, I will frankly acquaint you, and with a heart full o' rapture, that I am myself a member of that Church which you so ignorantly and wickedly persecute. Yes,—blessed be God!—unworthy though I be o' so great an honour, I am now a child of the Holy Catholic Church! The good priest overpaid me beforehand for his release by baptising me last night into the Fold.'

Whilst thus speaking, a glow of colour had mounted to Mistress Windwood's cheeks; her eyes had brightened with enthusiasm and delight; and the look of depression

which had so long marked her face had totally disappeared. Not for many years had she looked so young or so pretty as at this moment, and for an instant the Justice regarded her with a surprise which somewhat checked his wrath. Only for an instant, however; then his rage rushed back with redoubled force; and pouring out a torrent of abusive language, he declared, in one breath, that he would have her confined as a lunatic, lest she should disgrace himself and Caroline by a repetition of the avowal she had just made; and in the next, that he would, without fail, deliver her up to suffer the full penalty of the law. Then, recurring to the question which he considered to be of the more immediate consequence, he approached her with a threatening gesture, and demanded anew to be informed of the hour at which the captives had left the house, and of the place—if she knew it—towards which they had directed their flight.

Raising her heart to heaven, Mistress Windwood sent up an ejaculatory prayer for strength; then quietly, but firmly, refused to enlighten her husband upon either of these points, though it was true, as she tacitly admitted, that she could have done so upon both; for the prisoners had gratefully taken their liberator into the consultation they had held as to whither, upon regaining their freedom, they should betake themselves for safety.

This refusal, couched though it was in conciliatory language, added the last drop to the Justice's cup of fury. Almost beside himself with irritation and rage, he now seized his wife by the throat, swearing under his breath that he would murder her outright if she did not instantly communicate to him the intelligence he desired. And that he actually designed to fulfil the threat seemed more than probable; for it was not until her face had become quite purple beneath the constriction that he relaxed the *close* pressure of his fingers, and, without removing them,

again repeated his interrogation. It met with the same response as before: Mistress Windwood held bravely to her resolution, and refused to comply with his demand. Believing, however, that her end was near, she added to this refusal an earnest exhortation to her unhappy husband that he would repent him of his sinful career and amend his future life.

Mimicking her words, and still holding her by the throat, the brutal man raised his foot, and again kicked her several times in rapid succession. Then, with a blasphemous oath, and applying to her a string of vile epithets, he hurled her violently from him. Sick with pain, and dizzy with semi-strangulation, the poor lady reeled backwards several steps, and fell heavily into the empty fireplace, her back striking against a low fender, or railing, which surrounded it, the top of which was ornamented with dull-pointed iron spikes. There she lay motionless; and believing that he had actually killed her, the bully's ferocious passion gave place on the instant to a cowardly terror of consequences. Approaching with trembling footsteps, he bent to examine her, his own face blanching as he noted the marble pallor and rigidity of hers; and cursing alternately his late fury and the victim of it, he stood for a little time in agitated reflection. Then stooping, he carefully arranged her dress so as to hide the red marks left by his fingers upon her throat, and going to the door, rang a handbell. A man-servant speedily appeared in answer to the summons, and telling him in a hoarse voice, and with a civility and gentleness of manner which struck the man as strangely contrasting with that usual with his master, that his wife had stumbled over a footstool and fallen into the fireplace, he begged him to look at her, adding that he feared she had died from the effect of some injury sustained through the accident. With an ejaculation of dismay the man obeyed, and, to the Justice's sur-

prise and intense relief, at once declared it to be his belief that the ill-used lady had only swooned. And when presently he lifted her from the ground, at that gentleman's behest, in order that she might be placed upon the bed, his opinion found confirmation, for in the transit Mistress Windwood so far revived as to give utterance to two or three feeble moans.

Satisfied by these tokens that he had not absolutely committed murder, the amiable functionary's apprehensions vanished. Commanding the man to say nothing for the present about the state in which he had found his mistress, he despatched him in search of her maid, and leaving his injured wife in charge of the latter, he himself shortly descended below stairs.

Here he found considerable excitement prevailing on account of the prisoners' escape, news concerning which had already circulated throughout the house; and resuming his ordinary gruff and tyrannical tone, he ordered the women, who had gathered to talk of it, to disperse about their customary avocations, and the men to prepare themselves to accompany him in pursuit of the fugitives, and under pain of his displeasure to be mounted, and to have horses saddled in readiness for himself and Master Willoughby, within a quarter of an hour. In the mean time, as they snatched together a hasty breakfast, he consulted with Walter—who, seeing that his own interests would not be jeopardised thereby, had much ado to conceal the gratification he felt at the turn events had taken—as to the most likely course for the liberated captives to have pursued in their flight from Ridgwood Manor.

Somewhat timidly—for he was conscious that in so doing he was endeavouring to deceive—the young man gave it as his opinion that his stepfather and his companions would in all likelihood have returned to their homes; and advised that search should, in the first place,

be made for them at Hall-i'-th'-Wood and Erleston Grange. Pooh-poohing this suggestion, without, however, appearing to suspect Walter of any evil design in making it, the worthy magistrate declared decisively that their own houses were the very last places to which they would have thought of betaking themselves, and affirmed that, in his judgment, the 'vermin' would make straight for some port, most probably Liverpool, and would thence try to get out of the country, with the intention of afterwards sending for their families.

To Walter's extreme vexation, for the idea was just that which had occurred to himself, the Justice decided accordingly upon giving chase to his prey in the direction of the above-mentioned town ; and daring neither to oppose this resolution, nor to decline accompanying his intended father-in-law, the unhappy young man found himself, after an affectionate leave-taking of Caroline, setting off upon the unwelcome journey, and waving his hat to his *fiancée* as she stood on the hall-steps to watch the departure.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

JUSTICE WINDWOOD IN PURSUIT OF HIS ESCAPED CAPTIVES.

THE day was fair and bright, but the roads, owing to the late rains, were in a wretched condition ; and notwithstanding that Justice Windwood pushed forward at as great a speed as could be kept up by his followers' horses, the progress of the party was of necessity slow. It did not, however, appear so to Walter Willoughby, who, feeling convinced that they were upon the fugitives' track, was casting about in his mind, as he rode in silence by his companion's side, for some means to divert the pursuit from its present course, and growing momentarily more uneasy beneath the failure of his attempts to conceive of any. For now, as we have said, that his friends' escape would not necessarily involve the loss of the prize he had secured through their betrayal, the young man was more than anxious that that escape should be effected. And of this there was, he reflected, little chance, so long as the chase was directed along the route they had followed ; since, at howsoever early an hour of the previous night the captives might have been released, it would be impossible for them to have walked so far but that they must shortly be overtaken by their mounted pursuers. And, that the liberated men would be obliged to prosecute their flight upon foot, Walter was assured ; for, since learning of their escape, the Justice had several times boastingly congratulated himself on having deprived his late prisoners of the power to hire horses by robbing them of their purses, which he had done, he informed Walter, upon

placing them in confinement in his house, and as a precautionary measure against the bribery of servants.

Under these circumstances, therefore, the pursuit, comparatively tardy though it was, seemed to the unhappy traitor to be advancing with painful rapidity; and it was with secret eagerness that he seized upon certain opportunities, which by and by presented themselves, for retarding it in some slight degree. These opportunities were afforded by the fact that, after proceeding some considerable distance without drawing bridal, the Justice began to stop at each village or detached cottage he passed, and also to arrest all travellers encountered upon the road, in order to make inquiries concerning his missing captives. Joining in the conversations thus brought about, Walter endeavoured, by detailed descriptions and cross-questionings, to prolong them as much as possible. He dared not, however, overdo his pretended zeal in this matter, especially as the worthy magistrate grew more irritated and impatient with every fresh disappointment that attended his interrogations. And for some time nothing but disappointment did attend them, for, whether guessing at his mission and wishing to frustrate it, or whether in reality unable to afford it, no person could or *would* give the priest-hunter any intelligence respecting those of whom he was in search.

At length, howbeit, after nearly three hours' hard riding, and just as both Walter and himself were beginning, with very different sentiments, to doubt the correctness of the notion they had taken up in common, with regard to the direction of the runaways' flight, they lighted suddenly upon distinct traces of them. This happened in a beautiful and picturesque but ill-populated locality, some miles from a village, and even out of sight of any habitation. Spurring on in this district in front of his followers, and in a very taciturn and evil-tempered mood, Anthony Windwood happened to glance to the right; and,

perceiving a labouring man felling timber in a wood which skirted the highway, he reined-in his horse, and put to him, without much expectation of a favourable reply, the question he had so often propounded, without success, to others. But, to his extreme gratification, it was not this time asked in vain. After regarding him and the approaching band of horsemen for a moment with wide-open mouth and an expression of dull surprise, the man—who was a stupid boorish-looking fellow—acknowledged that three gentlemen, answering to the description given, had passed along the road as he was at work in that same spot about six o'clock in the morning, and that they had stopped and spoken with him.

‘And, prithee, what wast they said to you, my worthy man?’ the delighted Justice was just inquiring, as Walter, who had galloped forward to rejoin him, drew up by his side.

‘Aweel, noble sir,’ returned the man, drawling out his words, and glancing from one to the other of his listeners, as though puzzling himself to find a reason for these queries, ‘they nobbut axed me an theer wur ony heawse or cottage near han’ wheer they could rest ’em a while, and get some’at i’ th’ way o’ victuals.’

‘Ha, ha! and what answer made you to that, good fellow?’ again questioned the elated magistrate, chuckling with glee, and taking out his purse to stimulate the reply.

‘Aweel, yur worship,’ rejoined his interlocutor, still looking bewildered, but brightening at sight of the purse, and rubbing his head to assist recollection, ‘aweel, aw axed the good gentlemen an it wur a tavern they wanted; an’ one o’ ’em, he laughed an’ said, “Nawe;” for that they’d naught to pay th’ reckonin’ wi’ at a tavern. “But,” quoth he, “we trusten to leet upo’ some good Christian ’at ’ll giv’ us a morsel of food for th’ love o’ Heaven.”

An' wi' that he axed me again an theer wur any heawse anigh wheer I thowt they'd be like to meet wi' charitable folk. "An'," quoth he, "aw'll be fain an there be; for, yo see, friend," quoth he, "we're a' three bespent wi' travellin'." An', i' feeks, yur honour, they simed so.'

'Ay, ay; go on, honest man, go on. And what said you next?' urged the Justice courteously, as the man paused in sheer astonishment at his own fluency of diction. 'What said you next?'

'Aweel, noble sir,' pursued the woodman, rubbing his head anew, and glancing again at the purse which had had so quickening an effect upon his speech and memory, 'aw couldn't but marvel to yer 'at th' poor fellows had no money i' their pockets, and them dressed i' th' fashion o' gentlemen. But, however, that wurn't nawe business o' mine; so aw said naught abeawt it, but aw tow'd 'em to goo to Ben Faulkner's o' Hooley Farm, an', quoth aw, "aw warrant, good gentleman, he'll giv' you a bellyful, and welcome." An' aw'll be sworn he did, yur worship; for an theer's a mon i' th' world liefer to giv' nor to get, that mon's Ben Faulkner; but,' he added, looking suddenly uneasy and doubtful, as though an unpleasant idea had suggested itself,—'but there's naught amiss wi' th' good gentlemen, is there, noble sir? You'll be a freend o' theers, aw reckon, bean't you?'

'Ay, ay; to be sure, I am,' returned the Justice, smiling grimly; 'a right good friend o' theirs; and I crave no better happiness at this moment than to be i' their company. Mayhap, honest friend, I may come up with them at the farm you speak on. Is't far from here?'

'Aweel nawe, it's not fur,' replied the man, speaking now with hesitation and reluctance, but covetously eying the coin extended towards him. 'Yo cannot see 't fro' yer, but it's nobbut joost t'other side yon cloomp of trees, on th' top o' th' brow theer,' he added, pointing to a group

of elms and aspens which stood upon the summit of a somewhat steep hill, up which the road in front wound, their bare and graceful branches defined against the clear winter's sky.

Tossing the labourer a shilling, and not waiting further to thank him for the welcome intelligence he had given, Master Windwood rode off jubilant with triumph, calling to Walter to follow, and again and again repeating to the disappointed young man that he should soon once more 'bag' the 'game,' and that the three fugitives would have to be 'wondrous alert' if they again escaped his custody.

The now regretful informant meanwhile stood looking after the party of pursuivants as they mounted the hill, clasping his guerdon tightly in his hand, and ruffling up his shock hair, as he muttered to himself, 'Dame! but aw mistrust me aw've done some mak' o' mischief. God send them poor gentlemen bean't Popish priests, an' that aw'm not a leather-yeded dolt! Aw ne'er thowt o' 't at th' toime; but, beshrew me, an yon man hasn't th' look o' a priest-catcher: a murrain on him! Heawever, aw've gotten a shilling,' he added, opening his hand to look at it; 'an' aw'll get drunk wi' 't this e'en.'

Hooley Farm being the first house to which Master Windwood and his companions came, after parting from the woodcutter, and being in the position indicated by the latter, there was no difficulty in finding it. Alighting upon reaching it, and leaving their horses in charge of the servants, the Justice and Walter passed up a narrow pathway leading through a patch of garden-ground to the low straggling building, and knocked upon the door. This was speedily opened to them by a black-eyed young woman, who held in her arms an equally black-eyed baby; and on the amiable officials asking to see the master of the house, she, with an appearance of some unwillingness,

invited them to enter; and preceding, ushered them into a large kitchen which gave upon the flagged entrance-passage. A good-looking man, tidily-dressed in walking-attire, and with a hat upon his head, was its only occupant. He was seated in front of a bright log-fire, with a table drawn up by his side, on which rested two trenchers, the one containing a loaf of bread and the other a haunch of beef, from which viands he had, for the last half-hour, been helping himself alternately by the aid of a huge clasp-knife. A folded paper lay also upon the table, but this, as his visitors were in the act of entering the room, the man adroitly, and without attracting observation, slipped into the breast of his jerkin. Then, removing his hat as they made their appearance, he respectfully returned the strangers' salutation, and pushing closer to it the settle from which he had risen, begged them to step forward to the fire, inquiring, as they advanced, what might be their 'worshipful pleasure.' In high good-humour, in anticipation of the success which now promised to attend his errand, Anthony Windwood courteously bade the farmer not to discompose himself; and motioning him to keep his seat, dropped upon a nearer bench; observing as he did so, and with an assumption of indifference in his tone, that he had merely called to make some inquiries concerning the three gentlemen who were at his house in the morning.

'Three gentlemen i' my heawse this morn !' repeated the yeoman, looking straight at the Justice, with an excellently-simulated expression of astonishment. Then, slowly shaking his head, he subjoined, 'Nay, good master, there wur nawe gentleman yere this morn.'

Nonplused for a moment by this emphatic denial, Master Windwood nevertheless recovered himself at once, and losing temper with his accustomed readiness, irascibly exclaimed,

'Have a care, worthy friend, have a care! 'Twere best not try to deceive me, for I know well the fellows were here. I have but now been apprised by a man i' the valley below that he directed them hither as a place where they'd be like to meet with a breakfast.'

'Heyday, Ben,' ejaculated the dark-eyed woman, as the speaker paused, addressing her husband, by whose side she had seated herself, 'it must ha' bin' that oaf Dan Ratcliffe,—a plague upo' him, for a—'

'Ay, ay, Sally,' interrupted Ben, significantly pressing her foot. Aw mak' nawe deawt on 't, for, as thou kneaws, he's a rare one for seein' ghosts and visions, is Dan. He's bin' dreamin', I trow, honoured sirs, abeawt them three gentlemen,' he added, turning to his visitors; 'for, by my faith, there wur nawe gentlemen yere this morn.'

'What! you *will* make shift to mislead me, will you?' growled the Justice, now becoming thoroughly incensed. 'Sdeath, 'twill be the worse for you! For, look you, my good man, I am a justice of the peace, and those fellows are runaway prisoners, scurvy Papists; and one o' them a Massmonger and traitor to boot, who hath broken gaol and lieth at this moment under sentence o' death. Wouldst aid such to escape the law?'

Ben shook his head, threw into his expression additional surprise, but again, and more positively than before, reiterated his assertion that he had seen nothing of the fugitives, and called upon his wife to support him in the assertion that they had not presented themselves at his house.

Irritated to the last degree by this attempt, as he supposed it to be, to throw him off the scent of his 'game,' the estimable Justice now burst forth into furious invective and threats against the offending couple. But, interrupting himself on a sudden, as an agreeable idea struck him, he pursued, in a different tone:

‘But stay; perchance, honest yeoman, you have some excellent reasons for telling me these falsehoods. The villains, peradventure, are e’en now secreted beneath your roof. Ah, that were a lucky thing! Come, an’t please you, we will have a look through the house.’

‘Nay, nay, aw’ll have nawe looking through my heawse,’ protested the yeoman, fidgeting with his dress, and feigning to look frightened, though his eyes twinkled with inward merriment. ‘An’ it would nobbut be a wast-in’ o’ your worship’s toime, for there bean’t nobody in’t but eawrsel’s; by my halidom, there bean’t!’

‘Ha, ha! we shall see that anon, my friend; we shall see that anon,’ remarked the Justice, recovering his spirits under the conviction, conveyed by the man’s manner, that his surmise would prove correct. And hastily quitting the house, he summoned a couple of his myrmidons to aid in the search, and, returning, peremptorily commanded the yeoman to lead the way, and to see that he passed over no hole or corner as he valued his lands and life.

Complying, as it were, under compulsion, but still professing reluctance, Ben Faulkner conducted the pursuivants to the different rooms of his dwelling, making a pause of hesitation before the door of each, and infinitely enjoying the excitement thus produced in his disagreeable and unwelcome visitor. As, however, these rooms were few in number, the search, notwithstanding the minuteness with which it was carried out, was soon over. And storming at the delay thus occasioned, and at the yeoman for the deception practised by his affectation of alarm, the enraged magistrate now ordered his followers ‘to horse;’ and remarking to Master Willoughby that, ‘by Jove,’ if they had any more such vexatious hindrances the caitiffs would be like to get to Liverpool ere they could overtake them, he stopped only to threaten the owner of Hooley Farm once more with all manner of

vengeance and punishment on account of his complicity with the criminals, and turned to leave the house.

Just as he reached the outer door, however, Master Faulkner, who, ever since his mention of the word 'Liverpool,' had been nervously biting his thumb-nail and listening with an uneasy and cogitated air to his interlocutor's angry menaces, appeared suddenly to come to a resolution. Following him into the passage, he called out,

'Heigh, there, master! Coom back, will you?'

The Justice hesitated, and looked round with inquiry in his frowning countenance. And giving him no time to speak, Ben resumed, in a humble and pleading tone, very different from that he had until now employed,

'Heigh, master, coom back; for aw've som'at to say. Aw've bin tellin' yo a bushel o' lees abeawt them gentlemen, for, i' sooth, they wur yere this morn, th' very three yo've descript. An' aw *did* giv' 'em their breakfast, yur worship, for a' aw said aw didn't. An' moor, aw wot reet weel whither they've gone; an', an yo'll nobbut sweer first 'at nawe harm shall befall me or my dame, by reason of what we ha' done, aw'm minded neaw to acquaint yo o' the same. For, good sir, yo've giv'n me a sore affright wi' what yo ha' said abeaut th' law bein' able to hang us both for harbourin' and relievin' them. Alack for mercy, kind master, coom back; prithe coom back!' And thus urging, Master Faulkner held the door of his kitchen persuasively open.

Acquiescing, as a matter of course, in this request, Master Windwood, with a lightened mind and cleared brow, stepped back into the apartment he had just quitted, and resuming his seat, in compliance with a sign of entreaty from the now obsequious farmer, he readily gave the required assurance that his fault should be forgiven, and all punishment averted, on condition of his making a full

disclosure of all that he knew concerning the liberated recusants.

‘Ay, trust me, worshipful sir, but aw’ll mak’ a clear breast on ‘t,’ promised Ben, with an appearance of great sincerity. ‘Aw’ll tell a’, if aw tell aught. So, to get agate o’ my story, it must hav’ bin close upo’ heawf-past foive this morn, as near as aw can reckon, when theer coom a knock to th’ door, an’—’

‘O Ben!’ burst in his wife, recovering voice at this juncture; for since the farmer had summoned back his departed visitors she had been staring at him in blank amazement. ‘Why, Ben! sure thou’rt ne’er goin’ to bewray th’ poor gentlemen? Heigh, mon, what can ha’ coom o’er thee!’

‘Howd thy peace, Sally!’ commanded the yeoman sharply. ‘Didst not yere what th’ good Joostice said abeawt hangin’ us? Nay, nay, dame, aw’ve nawe mind to have my neck stretched, nor thine noather, so hush’d wi’ thee, and let me tell my tale. Come, lass, dunnot cry,’ he added, in a gentler tone, as Sally now broke into hysterical weeping, and the baby, at the same time set up a sympathetic howl. ‘Dunnot cry,’ he repeated; ‘faith, thou’rt a foolish wench; dunnot cry, aw tell thee!’

But Sally did cry, and the baby too; and, notwithstanding Justice Windwood’s angry and impatient menaces, it was some time before sufficient silence could be obtained to allow Ben to continue his narrative.

When, however, in spite of Sally’s entreaties to the contrary, the worthy yeoman did resume it, he told his story in a succinct and unhesitating fashion; relating how, on opening the door, he had been accosted by three gentlemen, of whose identity his descriptions left no doubt; how they had begged him, in the name of God, for food and rest; how Sally and he had made them heartily welcome; and how, furthermore, whilst busy

with their trenchers, the guests had inquired whether he and his wife were Catholics, and, on receiving their answer (which Ben declined to repeat), had become very communicative; one of them acknowledging that he was a priest, and the others confessing that they had, on the previous day, been seized whilst at Mass, and carried prisoners to the house of a justice of the peace, who, as Faulkner opined, must have been his 'worship's self;' but that, early in the night, they had been released by a good lady, who was the justice's wife; and had, throughout the intervening hours, been hurrying at their utmost speed along the roads and bypaths which, they conceived, would lead them most directly towards Liverpool; 'for, as your worship has reetly guessed,' observed Ben, pausing for breath, 'twur for that town they had first bethought themsel's o' making.'

And are they not *now* making for 't?' inquired the Justice eagerly. 'Whither, then, have they betaken themselves? Beware, friend, that you speak naught but verity.'

Ben protested, with emphasis, that he would adhere strictly to the truth; and then proceeded to inform his auditors that, some time before reaching his house, the gentlemen—having reflected that a pursuit would in all probability take place, and that they might naturally be suspected of a design to quit the country, and by the very port they were aiming at as being the most convenient—had resolved to alter their plans, and to go instead to a town called Hull, which they had apprised him (Faulkner) was 'in Yourkshire,' and to endeavour to sail thence for some foreign port. Never having been there himself, for he was no great traveller, as he parenthetically remarked, Ben could not say how far Hull was from Hooley Farm; but, he misdoubted him, it was a very long and wearisome journey for the poor gentlemen to have undertaken, and

innocently appealed to Master Windwood for information on the question.

'Ay, ay, my good fellow, 'tis as you say a long journey to Hull; but I warrant you we'll shorten it for our valiant runaways,' observed the Justice, smiling affably. 'Twere a discourteous act to suffer they were footsore, whiles we can offer them a seat upo' horseback. Come, my pretty son,' he added, rising hastily and addressing young Willoughby, 'let us after them; and I wager we soon o'ertake them on our stout nags. My fellows shall then ride double, and we will mount the priest and his comrades, though, I fear me, they may scarce approve the change of route that will follow.'

'Nay, stay, an't please yo, worshipful master,' requested Faulkner, as the zealous magistrate was about to hurry his reluctant associate from the house,—'stay, an't please yo, for aw ha' not gotten to th' end of my story yet. There's more to tell 'at aw'm afeared'll vex you sorely to yere. Nathless, it wur no fault o' mine, nor o' Sally's noather; so aw trusten yur worship'll stick to th' promise you've mad' us 'at nawe ill shall leet upo' us for it.'

'I shall keep my word, honest yeoman, rely upon 't,' returned Anthony Windwood, uneasy and curious to learn what further he had to communicate. 'You and your good dame shall be held scatheless for whatsoever share you may have had in aiding and abetting the prisoners' escape; so speak out boldly, man, and without delay.'

'Weel, then, worshipful master,' rejoined Ben, attentive to mark the effect of his words, 'an aw *must* own th' truth, them poor gentlemen beant upo' foot no longer, nor hannot bin these three hours back. An he tell nawe lee 'at offert them, they're upo' th' backs o' three as fleet geldings as could be found in th' whole country-side.'

'What !' shouted the fiery-tempered Justice, springing

from the seat into which he had again thrown himself, and pouring forth a volley of blasphemous oaths. 'What! you would give me to understand, caitiff, that some person has accommodated those gallows-birds with horses? By my word, he shall swing for 't, whosoever he be! Quick, fellow; certify me how know you this? And what fool was 't who thus thought fit to run his neck into the noose?'

'Nay, yur worship, beshrew me an aw kneaw his name only better than yoursel'. Howbeit, what aw *do* kneaw aw'll tell, an' moor aw cannot do, as yo'll own.' And without further preamble Master Faulkner related, garnishing his account with such realistic personal descriptions and incidental items of information as left no doubt of its truth in his listener's mind, that, late upon the previous night, Sally and he had been roused from their slumbers by a belated traveller, who had besought quarters for the night for himself, two serving-men, and three horses; explaining that he had been unexpectedly detained upon his way, and not being well acquainted with the road he was following, dared not proceed farther in the darkness.

That this request should have been unhesitatingly complied with formed no matter of surprise to Master Windwood or his companions, hospitality being in those days freely exercised, especially in little-frequented districts. And having stated that the strangers were at once admitted to his house, and their steeds placed under shelter in an outbuilding, the proprietor of Hooley Farm went on to recount how that the gentleman had come down from his sleeping apartment whilst his newly-arrived guests were in the act of partaking of their meal; how he had at once, as though by instinct, recognised Father Christopher for a priest; and how, on the conclusion of the history of their escape, which he had been a chief

agent in drawing forth, he had clapped his hands and thanked God for the mischance that had detained him at the farm all night, and had persuaded the gentlemen not to tarry for the rest they had intended to take, but, as soon as they had breakfasted, to mount behind himself and his attendants, and let themselves be carried with all speed to his house. Upon reaching that house, he had furthermore promised that he would provide the escaped prisoners with three as good-breathed horses as were ever bestrod, would give them money to defray all expenses of their flight to the Continent, and would moreover count himself overpaid for the service by knowing that he had done it unto them that were 'persecuted for justice' sake, and by securing to himself the benefit of their good prayers.'

'Perdition seize him,' exclaimed Anthony Windwood, when, having given in his own words that of which we have repeated the substance, Master Faulkner ceased to speak, 'and you too, knave! Why didst not tell me sooner about this pestilent recusant? I would well-nigh as lief take him as the other three. Come, fellow, undo your ill-deeds so far as you can. Certify me belive where is his home, and what his name and degree.'

'Nay, yur worship, aw cry yur worshipful pardon,' returned the farmer meekly; 'but i' good sooth aw can giv' you no answer to oather o' them questions. He wur a stranger to me, wur th' gentleman; for aw'd ne'er set eyes upo' him afore; an' though, aw own, aw did ax his name and wheer he lived, he made pretence not to yere me, and shifted the talk to some'at else; and, to tell th' truth, aw believe he wur a bit mistrustful o' me and Sally. Heawever, to end my tale, th' upshot o' 't a' wur, yur worship, that th' three gentlemen went off wi' him and his jackmen; an' aw deawt but yo'll ha' to follow them a' th' way to Hull, an yo' mean to catch 'em.'

husband's question until she had carefully adjusted the coverlets about the child. Then springing forward, she caught him about the neck, and hugged him until he was almost breathless, ejaculating, between the loud kisses which she bestowed upon his ruddy cheek, 'God bless thee, Ben! God bless thee! Thou'rt th' best liar i' the whole world. Certes, but them tales slipped off thy tongue as light as water off a duck's back. God an' eawr Lady forgive me, but aw'm proud o' thee this day. But, Ben,' she continued, calming down a little, 'tell me why didst call back the scurvy priest-hunters joost when they wur gooin' off? An' why didst own to kneawin' aught abeawt th' good gentlemen after we'd sworn 'at they'd never bin yere? Aw cannot quite mak' eawt what thou'st bin after wi' a' thy lies, good man?'

'Why, Sally, didst not yere th' chap say 'at he wur goin' to follow th' gentlemen to Liverpool?' asked Ben. 'An' couldst not see aw wur afeard he'd o'ertake them?'

'O, ay,' returned Sally, smiling broadly as comprehension dawned upon her somewhat dull mind, 'aw see neaw; an' so thou sent 'm off upon another road.. Odsbody, 'twas well thought on. But, Ben, heaw couldst say thou wert never i' Hull, when thou kneaws reet weel thou wert theer nobbut six weeks sin', seein' thy brother John off for a sailor?'

'Weel, lass,' rejoined Ben, pondering, 'aw cannot reetly tell why aw said that, onless it wur because aw thow't when aw wur agate o' leein' aw might's weel do 't gradely.'

'Bless thy handsome face,' exclaimed his wife, kissing him again; 'an' heawever couldst think o' all them things abeawt th' gentleman an' his servant, Ben, when there's nawbody o' th' sort yere? Heaw couldst say 'at he'd a' the same skin, an' tell th' colour o' his eyes and hair, an' the knaves had a red head? Why, man, aw

Windwood gave us our liberty last night ; may God reward her for the deed ! We are now flying to Liverpool, whither I pray you and our daughters, and Kate and poor Lady Anderton, to follow us with all possible speed. Nicholas Weston will guide you to the house of Lady A—, whither we will ourselves repair. All further news when we meet. We shall, without ceasing, pray for your safe arrival, and do you pray likewise for us.

‘ Your loving husband,
‘ J. R.’

CHAPTER XXIX.

ON BOARD THE DRUGGER.

SOME eight years after the time at which the events recorded in our last chapter took place, a large schooner, with canvas full spread, was sailing along the English Channel in an easterly direction. A French flag streaming from the mast-head announced its nationality, whilst the words 'L'Alouette, Dieppe,' painted in white letters beneath the figure-head, indicated its name and the port to which it belonged. A slight peculiarity in the build furthermore marked the vessel as of a description technically termed 'drugger'—this appellation bearing reference to a trade in which it was at certain periods of the year engaged, viz. that of importing drugs and spices from the Levant. With equal propriety, however, it might have been designated a fishing-vessel, since, for several months annually, it was employed in the business of fishery, for which business, as well as for the manufacture of lace, the small but thriving town of Dieppe was, in the sixteenth century, much celebrated. Expeditions for the purpose of taking fish, more especially herring, were at this period conducted each season, by the enterprising inhabitants of that town, as far north as Shönen in Sweden. These fish, having been submitted to a process of curing, were afterwards transported to various places upon the Mediterranean, in order to be bartered for the drugs and spices indigenous to those localities.

It was with a cargo of such aromatic vegetable pro-

ducts, and after a cruise around the above-mentioned sea of nearly six months' duration, that the *Alouette* was now returning towards Dieppe; and at the moment at which we would introduce the vessel to our reader's attention, it was fast nearing the termination of its voyage. That very evening—and it was now past noon—it would, it was expected, enter the harbour of Dieppe; and great was the excitement prevailing amongst the crew, most of whom were natives of Normandy, and had relatives or friends living in Dieppe or its vicinity, at the prospect of so shortly landing upon *terra firma*, and rejoining again their kindred and acquaintance. Snatches of song kept breaking from one and another of the men as they pictured to themselves the happy reunions towards which they were hastening; and the general hilarity rose presently to so high a pitch that it was with difficulty that the mate (who, owing to the indisposition of the captain, had for several days been in deputed command of the vessel) could restrain it within proper limits. When, however, about two in the afternoon, the captain, or, as he in reality was, owner of the vessel, made his appearance upon deck, there was no longer any difficulty in preserving subordination or attention to duty; for so high was the estimation in which this gentleman was held by his seamen, that his presence alone was at all times sufficient to insure, upon their parts, diligence and good behaviour. And at the present moment it was more than ever calculated to do so; first on account of certain marks of suffering exhibited in his face and person, which called forth their sympathy; and again, because on the occasion when those sufferings were brought about—that of an encounter with a pirate-vessel, which had taken place about a week ago in the Bay of Biscay—the young captain, who was but twenty-eight years of age, had manifested so much bravery and skill, that the admiration previously entertained for him by the

sailors had, if possible, been increased. The attack of this black-flagged ranger of the sea had been sudden, and the fight which ensued sharp; but so ably had the latter been contested by the captain and crew of the *Alouette*, that, whilst nearly a score of dead bodies had that same night been consigned to the watery deep from the deck of the pirate, only two of the 'drugger's' men had perished, and none excepting the owner had been injured. This injury was of a very distressing, though not of a fatal, character. It consisted in the loss of all the fingers from the left hand, severed thence by a sabre-cut; and the wounds not having been attended to with sufficient promptitude, there had been considerable loss of blood, which as a consequence had engendered so much weakness that the sufferer had been compelled for a time to keep his cabin.

As he now came upon deck, walking feebly, and with his arm in a sling, the young captain looked very pale, and his face was perceptibly thinner than before the casualty. He presented, nevertheless, a pleasing appearance, being a well-developed and remarkably handsome man, with large dark eyes, regular features, and a dignity of expression and carriage rare in one of his years. Unlike his crew, who, as we have said, were all French, the owner of the *Alouette* was by birth an Englishman; and when the sailors crowded around to congratulate him on his reappearance amongst them, and to offer their respectful condolences on account of his misfortune, he replied to them in their own language, but with a decidedly foreign accent. On this occasion, too, there was a curtness, almost amounting to brusqueness, in his manner of returning the affectionate salutation of his men, more consonant with the English characteristics than with the French, but which, in truth, was totally unlike that usual with the young man. And when, surprised and

somewhat hurt at his reception of their kindly civilities, the seamen had dispersed to their several duties, he signalled the mate to retain his post of authority, and retiring to the fore part of the ship, seated himself alone upon a coil of rope in the prow, and with his cloak gathered closely around him, sat looking out over the sea.

It was a clear day of early spring, cold, but bright; and although the vessel was almost in mid-channel, the coast of Normandy was visible to the right, stretching like a low gray mist in the distance. With his eyes fixed upon the line of the coast, the young captain remained motionless, buried in thought, which, to judge from the air of sadness and dejection upon his countenance, must have been anything but of a pleasant nature. By degrees, however, as he sat there with the fresh sea-breeze blowing in his face, and the sound of the waves dashing and rippling against the ship's side in his ears, his expression altered. The cloud of anxiety or sorrow lifted itself from his brow, and the lines about the handsome mouth relaxed from their drawn look of pain into one of peace and contentment. Before revealing the cause of his inward disquietude, or explaining by what process of reflection the young man arrived at the happier frame of mind indicated by his change of look, we must introduce or rather *re-introduce* him as an old acquaintance, for in fact the skipper or proprietor of the 'drugger' was none other than William Anderton. How he comes, after the lapse of eight years, to present himself before us in the garb of a sailor, instead of that of a priest, and what during those eight years has been the history of others to whom this story relates, a brief retrospection will show.

Thanks to the *ruse* practised upon our amiable friend Justice Windwood by the good yeoman Benjamin Faulkener, the three fugitives reached Liverpool in safety, and

betaking themselves to the house of the Lady A—, mentioned in William's letter, they found there hospitable welcome and secure concealment. In a couple of days afterwards they were joined by Mistress Rutherford and her two daughters, with Kate and Lady Anderton, who, poor lady, had given much distress to her friends, and trouble to her escort, worthy Master Weston, by her reluctance to quit Erleston Grange, and frequent attempts to escape from her companions upon the road. After nearly a fortnight spent in awaiting the return of Captain Etienne Duval and his trading brig, and rendered uneasy by the constant fear of pursuit and discovery, the Ander-tons and Rutherfords, with Nicholas Weston and his wife, leaving Father Christopher behind, eventually embarked one moonlight night, and set sail for France in the same vessel in which William had made his escape thither; whilst Justice Windwood, fuming with impatience, and beginning to feel assured that he had been tricked, was still watching the wharf at Hull.

It was a sad voyage, and naturally so, spite of the causes for thankfulness in that freedom had been regained and threatened lives saved. For, excepting a small sum realised by the sale of a few valuables which the ladies had brought with them on their hasty flight from Waradale, and which had been disposed of with much precaution in Liverpool, the whole party were absolutely penniless. Flying from their native land—leaving homes which until lately had been the abodes of wealth and comfort—they were going, as poor and unknown adventurers, to settle in a foreign country; robbed of their lands and estates, and forced into exile, as the only alternative with death for some, ruin and starvation for the rest. And all for no other reason than that they would not consent to stain their consciences, and hazard the loss of their souls, by apostasy from the Church of God. It would have been

strange, indeed, therefore, if the poor emigrants—especially those among them who had reached an age when such a total change in all the conditions and surroundings of life must, of necessity, be painfully felt—had been otherwise than downhearted and anxious. But, whilst this was the case, there was now, and had been from the first, a sensible sweetness mingled with the bitter cup of their adversities; for were not all these sent by God, and to be borne for His sake? Only *one* thing, as will be admitted by all good Christians, can produce positive wretchedness in the soul, and that is the loss of God's grace from it, brought about by personal and grievous sin; and from this misfortune, at any rate, the sad little group of passengers on Etienne Duval's boat had been happily preserved. Sorrowful, therefore, though they were in truth—dispirited and solicitous—they were neither repining nor miserable. The hopes of each and all were fixed upon One whom they recognised as their Father and Friend; and 'Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him,' was the spirit in which, like holy Job, they received the strokes of that 'blessed rod,' for whose descent Kate Anderton had sometimes prayed, in the happy days which now seemed so long gone by, when Waradale had been free from persecution. But the afflictions and vicissitudes which had fallen to the lot of our friends, and which had been so patiently and piously borne by them, were destined now to be of but little longer duration. The darkest hour is ever that which immediately precedes the dawn; and very shortly promise of a bright coming day began to appear in the horizon.

Upon arriving at Dieppe, whither he had gladly given them a free passage, the young merchant, Etienne Duval, whose amiable and gentlemanly qualities William had by no means exaggerated, conducted the entire party to his father's house. There they met with a most cordial recep-

tion, and with an invitation from M. Duval, couched in very pressing terms, to remain in their present quarters as long as they pleased. And for the time, being without homes to shelter them, or means of self-support, Sir John and the Squire felt obliged to accept this proffered hospitality for themselves and their families. Accordingly, with expressions of heartfelt gratitude, they did so. And leaving them comfortably established in the abode of the wealthy tradesman, who had gained his fortune by the business of fishing and drugging, to which we have referred, Etienne set off for Rheims to acquaint William of all that had recently befallen his friends, and of the fact that, although they had escaped to France according to his desire, it was as destitute refugees, and not as comparatively well-to-do settlers, that they had landed upon this foreign shore. Deeply distressed with the news, William, with the approbation of his spiritual advisers, and without hesitation upon his own part—though not without many a pang of disappointment—at once relinquished the idea of devoting himself to the priesthood, and hastened back with Etienne, to devote himself, instead, to the duty of supporting his family. Occupation which might enable him to earn a livelihood for those whom he loved was, on his applying for it, readily offered by M. Duval, though with many apologies for its unsuitableness to his rank as the son of a baronet. But William had no false pride in his nature. Scouting the idea that he could be degraded by any work undertaken from a sense of duty, he thankfully accepted the service found for him aboard one of M. Duval's fishing-vessels, and sailed for Sweden on the week following his appearance at Dieppe. During this voyage he applied himself with the utmost diligence to learn the arts of navigation and fishery, and so profited by his studies that, upon a second expedition of the same vessel, he was *able* to fill, with satisfaction to himself and his employer, a

position second in command. His *third* voyage was undertaken as skipper, and with the understanding that he was to share equally with the proprietor of the ship in the profits of the enterprise. These profits, owing to his attention to business, and to an unusually excellent fish season, proved to be very large, and with them William became part owner of the craft. Another voyage or two and M. Duval's liberality enabled him to purchase for himself the schooner *Alouette*, a large first-class vessel, then newly built. To his former avocation he now added that of drug-merchant, and in all his undertakings was so remarkably successful that he soon grew quite rich. The small house in which he had at first established his parents and sister was presently exchanged for a larger, and eventually—some eighteen months before—he had built for them a dwelling, spacious and elegant in comparison with any in its neighbourhood, though bearing, of course, a strong inferiority to the massive and stately pile in which Sir John Anderton and all his children had been born, and in which for generations their ancestors had resided. And now William's efforts for the support of his family had ceased to be any longer necessary, and this, it had been understood, was to be his last voyage. His mother within the past year had breathed her last; his sister Kate was about to be married, and only awaited his return in order to celebrate her nuptials, whilst his father, as had been agreed, was in future to live with his daughter and intended son-in-law.

That intended son-in-law was Captain Etienne Duval. Four years before, this young man had lost a wife, to whom he had in very early years been united, but who, unfortunately, in the first week of her marriage, had met with an accident by which her spine had been so much injured that she had never since been able to rise from her bed. As a result of her spinal injury, her brain, too, had become

affected, and she had gradually lost the faculties both of memory and speech.

Since her removal from Erleston Grange, poor Lady Anderton's melancholy madness had taken the form of a desire to commit suicide ; and as she was very cunning in devising means for obtaining weapons wherewith to effect her purpose, it was necessary to watch her with the utmost assiduity. This office Kate had taken upon herself, and most unremittingly did she guard and nurse the unfortunate lady, never wearying or abating in the care with which she discharged these filial duties. At length, however, death relieved this dutiful daughter from her arduous though willingly-performed tasks. A slow decline—the result of the trouble which, preying upon the diseased mind, reacted upon the body—had gradually worn the once beautiful and gifted woman to a mere shadow of her former self ; and eventually, in the spring of the last year, she had passed away, with the old monotonous cry still upon her lips, 'O Henry, my son, my darling ! he is dead, dead, dead !'

All obstacles to their union being thus removed, Kate had readily consented to marry Etienne Duval so soon as a fitting time of mourning for her mother should have expired ; and the wedding had been fixed to take place upon William's return from this his last voyage.

As a dower, the good brother had promised to give Kate the house in which she resided with her father ; whilst on Sir John he had intended to bestow all else he possessed, with the exception of his ship. Of this it had been his design to dispose at the conclusion of his present expedition, and with the proceeds of the sale to return immediately to Rheims, there to resume, after eight years of interruption, his studies for the priesthood.

But now, alas, for the past few days he had known that this latter purpose must be abandoned for ever. The hope which, all through these eight hard working years, had

animated his zeal and cheered him on in the fulfilment of his duty had suddenly been extinguished. He, William Anderton, could never be a priest. God had decided this question for him through means of an accident which had befallen him. Never now dared he offer himself to the service of the temple, for how with maimed hands could he offer up the Holy Sacrifice?

It was this disappointment, and the mental distress occasioned by it, rather than his physical sufferings, which, in the interim between the affray with the pirate and William's reappearance upon deck, had wasted his frame and driven the colour from his cheeks. And it was the fact that he was still plunged in profound grief on the same account which had caused the slight impatience shown in his manner of returning the greeting of his crew, and which imprinted the sad expression upon his face, as he sat alone on the coil of rope, looking out over the sea towards the ever-nearing coast of Normandy.

In the weary hours which had elapsed since he had realised the consequence of his misfortune, William had been telling himself, over and over again, that his life had now become comparatively valueless—that neither to God nor his fellow-creatures could he be any further use. The necessity and duty of labouring for his family, as we have said, no longer existed; whilst that to which he had taught himself to look forward as furnishing at once the occupation and delight of his future days had been unexpectedly denied him. In the dejection of his first grief, therefore, he seemed to himself to have nothing more to do, and nothing more to hope for, in existence. But, though thus giving way to foolish despondency, there was in William Anderton's heart no conscious rebellion against the will of God. On the contrary, he accepted the fiat which had gone forth concerning him as a well-deserved punishment for his sins, finding (with the instinct which characterises

all humble souls) the cause for his afflictions in his personal faults. It was because he had been about to offer Him a divided heart—because he had never been able entirely to banish that earthly love which had once so completely filled and swayed his nature—that God had rejected his services, and shut him out from the high dignity to which he had dared to aspire.

So poor William thought; and in thus thinking did himself a great injustice. For although it was true that he had never ceased to love Helen Rutherford, he had—fully believing that there was no hope of his affection being returned—struggled hard to subdue it, and to turn his thoughts and desires wholly upon God. From the first moment, moreover, at which he had seen that it might be possible for him at some future time to return to college, he had renewed, in intention, the consecration of himself to the priesthood; and regarding it as wrong, under these circumstances, to indulge the love which he felt so sure was unreciprocated, he had, during the brief spaces of his residence in Dieppe, avoided Helen's society as far as possible, and when absent upon his voyages carefully restrained the inclination to think about her.

In this respect, therefore, his conduct had been blameless; and as he now sat gathering renewed strength of body from the invigorating sea-breezes, William's mental vision cleared, and he began to perceive that such had been the case. His spirits rose in accordance with the conviction; and presently there flashed across his mind an idea which, gradually ripening into a resolve, brought a glow of warm colour into his face, and caused his dark eyes to sparkle with enthusiasm. And well might they do so! for it was, in truth, a noble thought which had occurred to the young captain, and a noble determination he had formed. It was this—that instead of abandoning his present employment as he had intended, he would still

continue to labour at it as diligently as heretofore, and that he would devote all that he in future gained thereby to the cause of Christ. He might not be himself a priest—that honour, by the inscrutable but wise decree of Providence, had been denied him—but he might help others to become such. He might not himself return to his native shores as a missionary from God, but others, through his instrumentality, might enjoy that coveted privilege. He might not, in person, face the dangers of martyrdom in endeavouring to preserve and spread the Faith of his forefathers, but he might brave the perils of the sea in order to find means to enable others to attain that high dignity.

Inspired by suggestions and resolutions to this effect, William rose, and leaning over the ship's side, silently thanked God for having put them into his mind—little dreaming that he was, perhaps, more acceptable at that moment in the sight of God than he had ever been in his life, and that, through his perfect self-abnegation and humility, he had attained an exaltation which even the reception of Holy Orders might possibly not have conferred upon him. Then turning away from his contemplation of the sea and approaching shore, he took a little tour round the vessel, walking now with a comparatively vigorous step, and giving to each of his sailors a cheery word of praise or congratulation, and thus completely obliterating from their minds the effect of his late momentary abruptness of manner. Returning afterwards to his former post, he seated himself again upon the coil of rope, and remained there watching the low-lying coast as it grew each moment more distinct, with its rippling rills and unenclosed fields, its scattered villages and hamlets, its verdant woods and terraced vineyards, until at length the harbour of Dieppe came in sight, with fishing-vessels riding at anchor within it, and fishermen's cottages built upon its stone quay and stretching away along the coast, most of them hung about

by nets and other tokens of the calling of their inhabitants. A sweet-toned bell, from the massive steeple of St. Jacques, an ancient church rebuilt in the previous century, was just chiming out the hour of five, and already the sun was getting low in the horizon. Swiftly the vessel glides into the haven, amidst much shouting and excitement on the part of its crew; but before it touches the shore, we must relate, in a few sentences, how it has fared with the rest of our acquaintances since their landing in this country of their adoption.

Like William Anderton, both Squire Rutherford and Nicholas Weston had been indebted to the wealthy and benevolent M. Duval for a first provision of the means for gaining a livelihood for themselves and their respective families.

To find employment for the brave yeoman, and of a kind to which he was well accustomed, had been an easy matter; for, by the death of a trusty servant, a post had opportunely been left vacant as manager of a small farm belonging to M. Duval, and situated at some little distance from his home. Having ascertained that Nicholas was fully capable of filling this position, the kind gentleman, ere a week had elapsed from the time of his arrival in France, had installed him in it, and placed him and his wife in possession of a cottage formerly occupied by his predecessor. A very pretty and comfortable cottage it was, grown over with woodbine and other creepers, and standing in the midst of level fields, where in summer fat cattle browsed knee-deep in fragrant meadow-grass. A babbling brook ran close by its side, merrily taking its way to the sea, and behind stretched a vineyard, where in autumn clusters of purple grapes hung ripening in the sun's rays. A servant now, instead of a proprietor of the soil he tilled, living in a cottage which was the property of another, and receiving wages for his industry, Nicholas Weston, as was natural,

often cast sad and regretful thoughts upon 'Th' White Heawse o' Rudston Edge,' standing far away upon the hill-side at Waradale, and felt momentary kindlings of wrath and indignation as he reflected that that abode of his ancestors, with all its belongings, had passed into the hands of a stranger and a Protestant. Each night, nevertheless, as he laid his earless head upon his pillow, the good man thanked God from his heart for the mercies of his present lot, and in especial for the supreme blessings which he now enjoyed of freedom of conscience, and liberty to profess that holy Faith for which he had suffered, and which he so dearly loved.

No less fortunate than William Anderton and his humble friend Nicholas had been the efforts of Squire Rutherford to maintain his family in the land of exile. At the outset there had been, in his case, some difficulty in selecting a profession; but eventually the energetic little man had chosen one which, by previous education and experience, he was best qualified to exercise, viz. that of farmer and cattle-breeder. Obtaining from M. Duval some land and a small sum of money, he had commenced business in this line. But, for some time, it had been very up-hill work, and Mistress Rutherford and her daughters had been compelled to live in an abode little better than a cottage, and to do without the assistance of a maid-servant. By degrees, however, industry and economy had rendered their circumstances very easy, and, ere long, a strong tide of prosperity had set in. The debt to M. Duval, which had somewhat weighed upon the Squire's independent spirit, had, to his great delight, been discharged; addition after addition had been made to the small house; and now, at the close of eight years, Squire Rutherford was once more a wealthy man, and his wife and children in enjoyment again of that station in life to which they by birth belonged.

CHAPTER XXX.

ARRIVAL IN PORT.

THE *Alouette* being a sailing vessel, and depending, therefore, for its speed on the state of wind and weather, it had been impossible to reckon with exactitude upon the period of its return from so long a voyage. For some weeks, however, it had now daily been expected at Dieppe; and having been recognised upon its approach to the harbour, quite a little crowd had, by the time it reached the rough stone jetty where the landing was to be effected, gathered to welcome its arrival. Casting his eye over this assemblage—which consisted chiefly of men in the garb of fishermen, and of women amongst whom were those whose gesticulations and excitement bespoke them relatives of the *Alouette's* seamen—William perceived that none of his own immediate friends were present. Leaving the vessel in charge of his mate, with instructions that the unlading was to be deferred until the morrow, he slipped away from the group which had surrounded him, and made his way to the Church of St. Jacques.

The church stood in an open square not far from the pier, and it was William's pious custom to repair thither immediately upon landing from any of his voyages, in order to thank God for his preservation from danger, and for the success which had attended his adventures. Having accordingly, with much devotion, performed this sacred duty, the young captain quitted the building by another door, and passing through the town was presently hasten-

ing, as fast as his weakness would allow, along a rural lane which led towards the country suburb in which his home was situated.

Aware that, although from its basement story the harbour was invisible, the arrival of his vessel might have been perceived from the upper regions of the house, William thought it possible that Sir John and Kate might, as in case of this supposition they were sure to do, hurry forth to meet him upon the road. In order, therefore, to spare them the shock of seeing, without preparation, that he wore his arm in a sling, he stopped as he drew near the house, and throwing his cloak over his left shoulder, arranged it so as to cover the injured hand. This thoughtful precaution did not prove to have been taken altogether in vain ; for just as he was turning into the narrow tree-bordered pathway which wound through somewhat extensive grounds up to the door of the mansion, he almost ran into Kate's arms. That she had not, however, previously known of his arrival was testified by the exclamation of joyful surprise with which she greeted his appearance ; and for some time nothing but broken ejaculations of endearment interrupted the close embrace in which the brother and sister, whose affection for each other had always been of a peculiarly ardent nature, now united.

At length, holding her from him, William bent to study Kate's face ; and that the scrutiny satisfied him was proved by his saying, in a tone of mingled admiration and tenderness,

'How well thou art looking, my sister ! The thought of marriage meseems doth agree with thee well. Thy cheeks are fuller and rosier than when last I parted from thee, and thy eyes brighter. By my troth, Etienne Duval will have a bonny bride ! And when doth the wedding take place ? I fear me, dear Kate, that my absence,

prolonged so much beyond expectation, hath somewhat delayed it.'

'Not so as to signify, dear William,' responded Kate, laughing and blushing. 'Twill be early enough an it take place next week. But now, let me, in my turn, have a good look at thee,' she added, turning his face towards the fuller light, for it had hitherto been partially shadowed by a tree. 'O, William, how white and thin you are!' she resumed instantly, in a different tone, 'you must be ill or faint. O, why did I not see it before! Come, let us go straightway into the house.' And taking him by the hand, she began to lead him forward as though he had been a child.

William followed, laughing at his sister's solicitude, and endeavouring to reassure her by the assertion that, although he had in fact been unwell, he was now quite recovered from his short sickness, and only suffering from a little consequent weakness. Then to divert attention from this subject, as well as because he was most desirous of receiving it, he asked for news concerning his father. This Kate gave by informing him that Sir John was in good health, and that he had throughout William's absence on the voyage he had just terminated been in excellent spirits, excepting at such times as the weather was stormy, or when, of late, he had allowed his natural predisposition to anxiety render him uneasy about the delay in his son's return. She then went on to say that the Baronet had, about an hour ago, gone over to Squire Rutherford's, and that when she had met him she had herself been upon the point of following him there. She further explained that the Squire had only the previous day got back from a journey he had made to the neighbourhood of Rouen, with the purpose of obtaining a certain breed of long-woolled sheep, and that he had pressed Sir John to go to his farm that afternoon in order to in-

spect the purchase, which he considered a wonderful bargain; and had, moreover, invited herself and all the Duvals to supper in the evening.

‘And O, William,’ she pursued, ‘what a surprise and joy ’twould be for every one were you to accompany me thither! What a most welcome addition you would make to the party! But I fear me, dear brother, you are not able for the exertion of a further walk or ride; I had best send for our father to return hither at once, and the rest will be certain shortly to follow,’ she added, with a faint sigh, as though this conviction afforded her relief; ‘so we shall not fail of our reunion. ’Twill but be a change in the place o’ meeting.’

Suiting her actions to her words, Kate was about to quit the room in search of a messenger; for by this time William and she had reached the house, and entered, unperceived by any of its inmates, through a glass door which opened from the lawn into a small apartment devoted to Kate’s special use as a boudoir.

William, however, arrested the movement, protesting that he would suffer no alteration to be made in the plans for the evening, and that he would much enjoy accompanying her to ‘Le Bon Asile,’ as Squire Rutherford’s house was called, and taking all his friends there by surprise; and declared, furthermore, that he should, after a few moments’ rest, be perfectly equal to a short ride. That he should prefer, however, to reach the farm upon horseback, rather than by walking over the intervening space of a mile and a half, William frankly confessed; and having noted that the hour appointed for supper was fast approaching, Kate hurried off to order the saddling of her own nag and that generally used by her brother when at home. In the execution of this task she left the room, as she had entered it, by the glass door; and, wishful that William should enjoy the short rest he had bar-

gained for undisturbed, she bade the groom, whom she found in the stable and whom she was obliged to take into her confidence, to say nothing for the present about his young master's return to his fellow-servants, but to bring the horses quietly round to the front of the house as soon as they were ready.

On rejoining William, Kate was again struck by his pallor; and anxiously remarking that she feared he was more ill than he would acknowledge, stooped over his chair to renew her affectionate caresses. Then, observing that he still kept his cloak thrown across his shoulder, she proffered to remove it, and, in attempting to do so, discovered the bandaged hand. Her pitiful exclamations and inquiries, as her eye fell upon it, drew from William an account of the attack of the pirate-vessel, and an admission that he had been wounded in the affray. But the exact nature of his injury he kept back for the moment; simply assuring his companion that the wound was healing, and that the strength he had lost through it would, he hoped, soon be recovered.

Heartily reëchoing that hope, Kate promised, with a smile, that the recovery should be aided by good nursing; and then added an entreaty that her brother would remain amongst his friends for some little time, and not at once put in practice his intention of repairing to Rheims. 'For though, i' sooth, dearest brother,' she continued, 'we do all count it a great honour that you should be called to the ministry of the word, and that you should design to go forth to do battle for our Lord amidst danger of persecution and death, yet would we fain, in our weakness of zeal, and by reason of the love we bear you, still hold you back, for a space, from leaving us. Ah, dear William, promise me, beseech you, that you will stay with us for at the least three months, and we will then make shift to part with you willingly;' and Kate's

clasped hands and pleading eyes added force to her words.

An expression of deep sadness crossed William's face as he listened, and still lingered upon it when he replied, 'Nay, sweet my sister, you will not, I grieve to say, have occasion to make any effort to reconcile yourself to my departure on the account to which you advert, either now or at the end of three months. I am not going to Rheims at all, Kate; and I shall never be a priest. God in His wise providence hath ordered it otherwise.'

'Never be a priest!' repeated Kate, with a surprise in which was some consternation. 'And when you have been hoping for't so many years! O William, why is this? What mean you by't?' And she drew her chair anxiously nearer his own.

Taking her hand within his uninjured one, William gave his sister the explanation she demanded, quietly informing her of the loss of his fingers, and pointing out how that loss involved the relinquishment of his high aspirations.

Appreciating the disappointment her brother had endured, and which she supposed him still to be suffering, Kate burst into tears of sympathy as she offered him her heartfelt condolences. But William speedily interrupted the latter by telling her of the resolution he had formed, of continuing in his present avocation, and applying the proceeds of his labours to the support of missions in England, and thus in one way, if not in another, devoting himself to the cause he had at heart; and ended by assuring her, in a cheerful tone, that this resolution was a source to him of much consolation and pleasure.

With tear-drops arrested upon her cheeks, Kate gazed at him for some moments in speechless admiration. Then, finding words to express her feelings, she exclaimed, 'My noble brother! that resolve is in verity one worthy of your-

self. 'Tis a grand intent you have conceived, and 'twere a grand achievement in life to carry it out. Nathless, William,' she added, hesitating a little, 'I cannot but covet for you a share likewise in the temporal blessings and sweets o' existence; and God would not, I be well assured, have you entirely deprive yourself of these. You can fulfil your purpose, and yet— William, now you cannot be a priest, why should you not marry?'

William started as this question was put to him in so sudden and unexpected a manner. But, quickly recovering himself, he pinched his sister's cheek as he answered, with an assumption of liveliness and in a bantering way,

'Nay, good sister, I will rather ask, why should I marry? Silly wench! dost think there is no happiness i' the world without a wedding? Wouldst have us all to be marrying and giving in marriage because Cupid has lodged his shaft in thine own bosom? And prithee, if I may venture the query, who wouldst have me marry?'

Kate hesitated again, stroking her brother's hand as she deliberated. Then summoning courage, she replied, in a low and impressive tone,

'I would have thee, dear William, an thou couldst but love her in return, to marry one who loves thee.'

'One who loves *me*!' repeated William, his heart palpitating with a sudden hope which sent the warm blood rushing over cheek and brow—'one who loves *me*! Why, my Kate, who *does* love me?'

'Heyday, William, wouldst have me believe you do not know?' returned Kate, with an accent of some slight impatience. 'Certes, but you must be blind indeed, an you see not that Helen Rutherford loves you, and dearly too.'

'Helen Rutherford! Nay, Kate, 'tis you who are blind,' retorted William, a little bitterly—for his quickly kindled hopes had as quickly died out, leaving a pang of disappointment hard for the moment to endure—'tis you

who are blind, Kate. Helen has no thought o' loving me. Ah, dear sister,' he subjoined more gently, 'I know that which I assert to be true. I have excellent reason to be assured thereof.'

'Heigho, William, what strange mystery is this?' pondered Kate, regarding him with a puzzled air. 'You would certify me that you wot Helen does not love you, and yet I be well apprised of the contrary. And from your carriage just now, trust me, but I could almost conceit you to desire that love. Come, dearest brother, read me this riddle, beseech you. Open to me your heart. Belike I may be able in some way to serve or comfort you.' And as she spoke, Kate renewed her loving caresses of the hand she held.

Somewhat reticent by nature of his deeper feelings, William shrank for a few seconds from disclosing to his sister, in response to this invitation, the secret of his lifetime. But eventually, knowing that his confidence would be worthily bestowed, and believing that it would bring him relief to make it, and also excited by Kate's apparent conviction of the truth of her singular statement, and anxious to learn the grounds upon which it was based, William *did* open to her his heart. And the confidence, once resolved upon, was given fully, for William Anderton rarely did things by halves. As she listened, therefore, with the sympathy she felt gleaming in her hazel eyes, Kate now learned how that, from boyhood, her favourite brother had loved Helen Rutherford with all the ardour of his strong nature; how, unaware of her engagement to Henry, he had, on his return from Germany, offered her his hand; how, in consequence of his disappointment, he had suffered until his agony culminated in the temptation to self-destruction; and how he had been rescued from his misery by what he called a special revelation or divine interposition, and led thereafter to fix his desires upon the priesthood. By question and comment Kate then further

drew forth the fact that, upon his first coming to Dieppe, William had experienced a powerful revival of that love which, though it had never died out of his heart, he had for some time contrived to keep in a dormant condition ; but that, seeing his affection to be then unreturned, and believing that it would ever remain so, he had since been struggling constantly to overcome it, or at any rate to keep it in such subservience as that it should not interfere with what he had set before himself as the object of his life. And having thus put his sister in possession of the entire truth of the case as concerned himself, William asked, in a tone which betrayed his eagerness for the answer, what reason she could allege for the assertion she had made regarding Helen.

‘Faith, William, you may trust a woman’s instincts about a question of love in case o’ one o’ her sex,’ returned Kate, smiling with delight at the intelligence she had just gained respecting William’s feelings, and at the thought of the happiness that intelligence caused her to anticipate both for her brother and dearly-loved friend. ‘You may trust a woman’s instincts ; and I have long known, good brother, that matters stood with Helen as I say. But an you must needs have *proof* on’t—well, ’tis a great breach o’ confidence ; but hearken ;’ and bending closer, Kate whispered something in his ear.

William started now in reality ; but though every pulse in his body throbbed with responsive delight, he made no comment upon the communication he had received ; and as he sat almost bewildered by the unexpected revelation and unexpected joy which had overtaken him, Kate resumed :

‘And now, dear William, said I not right that God would not have you lack the sweets and blessings of life ? He hath, methinks, been all these years testing your faith and virtue, purging you i’ the furnace of affliction. And

you have come out therefrom like good metal, purified and brightened. You have met every trial He hath sent with resignation, and you have learned in the end to subjugate your own will entirely to His. And now, dearest brother, He, who hath shaped out your destiny otherwise than you did expect, doth design, I feel sure, to reward you otherwise than you have looked for. But *sée,*' she continued, interrupting herself, and springing herself to her feet, 'there are our horses, and we must away without delay, for 'tis already past the hour of supper. Mistress Rutherford and the Squire will be in great ire at the tardiness o' my arrival, though, peradventure, they may condone the offence when they learn the cause on't. Come, William, certify me, ere we go, that you will not refuse the gift God offers—that you will marry Helen.'

'I' faith, Kate, methinks you need scarce ask that question,' returned the young captain, following his companion to the glass door. 'An she would but have me, I—I— But dost *really* believe, good sister,' he faltered, laying a detaining hand upon her arm—'dost really believe Helen would have me *now*? Just bethink thee o' my condition, o' the loss o' my fingers. Thinkest thou Helen could set a loving heart against a maimed hand? Ha, I fear me, sister, we have been too sanguine!'

Kate laughed, a merry reassuring laugh; and breaking from him, she waved her hand in a pretended adieu as she exclaimed,

'Nay, William, an thou hast such a faint heart, thou hadst best remain behind there. I will ride alone to "Le Bon Asile."'

CHAPTER XXXI.

LE BON ASILE.

As may be supposed, William Anderton did not remain behind his sister; and riding hard on account of Kate's lateness for her engagement, the two very soon came within sight of the present homestead of the Rutherford family. Built, as we have said, piece-meal, the house presented a curious and somewhat patchy appearance. For the most part one-storied, it covered a large space of ground, and, together with the numerous out-buildings of the farm, looked in the distance more like a small hamlet than a gentleman's residence. Fertile and well-cultivated fields encompassed it in each direction, stretching away almost as far as the eye could reach; and although upon one side an apparently dense forest bounded the view, there was in its immediate vicinity very little timber. Both in its general appearance and in its surroundings, therefore, Le Bon Asile presented as striking a contrast from Hall-i'-th'-Wood as could well be conceived of between two dwellings of anything like similar size. But whilst undoubtedly superior in situation and more perfect in architecture, the comparison was nevertheless not altogether in favour of the lost Lancashire home. In spite of its unpretentiousness, there was about this low straggling abode in sunny Normandy a certain very agreeable air of comfort and well-to-do-ness, and also a brightness and cheerfulness, both in its interior and exterior aspects, that had been lacking in the more ancient and aristocratic dwelling.

Gaining admission by the entrance first reached—for there were several to the house—William followed Kate along one or two passages until they came to a room whence issued sounds of merriment, noisy enough to betoken the presence of a large party. It was not, however, a very large party which, upon opening the door, the new arrivals discovered in the act of seating itself around Squire Rutherford's hospitable and well-spread board, since it consisted of only nine people. But in the ensuing moment the nine appeared mysteriously to have multiplied, as with a babble of delighted acclamation they crowded confusedly forward to welcome the returned wanderer. All, nevertheless, gave place to Sir John, as, looking much older and feebler than when last we were in his company, he advanced to take, as was his right, the first greeting of his son; and when, according to the pious custom of the times, William knelt to receive his father's blessing, the Baronet's hand shook as he placed it upon the young man's head, whilst his voice trembled with joyous excitement so as to render him almost incapable of pronouncing the usual form of words. There was no nervousness, however, about Squire Rutherford's hearty salutations as, being nearest, he received the next shake of William's hand; and, as he gives and receives the greeting, we notice how lightly the last eight years have passed over his head, leaving him all but unchanged in their transit—the same jovial-looking, ruddy-faced little man, with only a few more crow's-feet about the corners of his eyes, and a few more threads of gray mottling the black mass of his hair.

In Mistress Rutherford's kind motherly face, upon which, as her husband moves aside, William now bestows a kiss of almost filial affection, time has wrought greater change. Thinner and paler than formerly, it has also become more decidedly marked with the lines of care and

age; and though no less sweet in its expression, there is about the eyes and mouth a touch of sadness never entirely absent, and for which the misconduct of her only son is to be held accountable—that son over whom her maternal heart still yearns, but of whom for eight long years she has heard no tidings.

Very trifling, however, seems the alteration in Mistress Rutherford's appearance when compared with that which has taken place in the form and features of her daughter Agnes, to whom William next turns. Grown from a child into a young lady, for she is now in her sixteenth year, Agnes has developed into a tall, slim, and graceful girl, almost as beautiful, William thinks, as he raises to his lips her proffered hand, as is her sister Helen. Very much more beautiful than Helen, thinks Auguste Duval, a handsome stripling of seventeen, who, happening to be close behind the young lady, gains possession of William's hand immediately after her, thus forestalling his father and mother—the former a tall, stoutly-built, fine-looking man, full of fire and energy; the latter a gentle slender little woman, with a refined face and cultivated mind. As they give way, Etienne returns the warm grasp of his friend; and after him steps forward his sister Marguerite, a tall girl of nineteen, with her father's energy of character and her mother's refinement of mind indicated in her physiognomy, and who is intending a few weeks hence to enter a convent of Sisters of Charity, and devote these qualities to the service of God and the poor. Lastly, advancing timidly from behind the rest, Helen approaches and tenders a little white hand, which is quickly seized in an eager clasp, and raised, without other speech than is expressed in his eyes, to the young captain's lips. The hand trembles slightly beneath the affectionate salute; but possibly that trembling might be more perceptible were Helen aware how closely the dark eyes now bent upon

her face have been observing her since their owner's entrance into the room—how, even whilst in the act of exchanging cordial civilities with others, those eyes have wandered continually to the spot where she has been standing in politic retirement behind the rest of the company.

This, however, has been the case ; and though Helen hopes to have escaped unnoticed, William has caught the vivid flush which overspread her face upon his unexpected appearance, and has also seen the strange pallor which succeeded as that flush died away. He has observed, moreover, the furtive pressure of her hand over her heart, as though to still its fluttering, and has noted the rapid conquering of her emotion until, with apparently no more agitation than the occasion warranted, she has been able to come forward and welcome him in her turn. And as he looks at her now, with the love and joy of his soul overflowing in his glances, William reflects that this is probably the first time for many years that he had met Helen without some measure of preparation upon her side, and wonders whether, if he had not previously had that conversation with Kate, he could have guessed from what he had this evening witnessed at the delicious secret which was filling him with such jubilation, and rendering the prospect of his future life almost too bright and glorious. These pleasant meditations upon William's part were speedily interrupted by Squire Rutherford, who, pretending to grumble at the commotion caused by the young man's arrival, now begged his guests to reseate themselves at table ; and as they obeyed the request, he laid hold of the cloak William had all this time worn over his left shoulder and arm in order to assist in its removal. Very reluctantly did the young captain let it go ; for, anxious to spare his friends the trouble he was assured a knowledge of his injury would occasion them, he would willingly

have concealed its evidence some time longer. As this could not be, however, he resolved within himself that, for this evening at least, he would keep back its extent. Accordingly, upon the sling and bandages attracting attention, he continued to make so light of his wound that all present, saving two, readily believed it to be a mere scratch of the sword. The two who proved less ready to take its insignificance for granted were Sir John, by whom William was seated on the one hand, and Helen, whom he had by a little scheming managed to get upon the other; and it was with some difficulty that he evaded their closer questionings. He succeeded, however, in doing so in the case of his father, by exciting that gentleman's interest in details of the affray with the pirate-vessel, and also in accounts of various other adventures which during his six months' absence had befallen him by sea and land. In Helen's case William adopted a different, but as it proved still more effectual, means of stopping for the present further undesirable interrogations. Bending towards her at a moment when the hum of general conversation had become somewhat loud, he entreated in a whisper that she would grant him a private interview after supper, and promised that he would then satisfy her kindly solicitude on the subject of his hurt, provided that she in return would satisfy *his* anxiety upon a question which was of the deepest moment to him, and about which she alone could give him reliable information.

Astonished at the request, but little dreaming of its import, Helen consented—with a blush, which she would willingly have avoided—to give William the private interview he asked; and thereafter sat wondering and speculating as to what he could have to say to her. Her musings, however, did not lead to any suspicion of the truth; for, just as positive as had been, a short time ago, William's conviction that she did not and never could

return his love, was Helen's that he had long ago ceased to care for her, and that his whole heart was bent upon the sacred vocation to which she still believed him to be aspiring.

It was a considerable time after supper before the interview could take place without exciting special notice, which William did not desire; for, as a matter of course, the young captain was the lion of the evening, and in great requisition with every one. But at length, by judicious manœuvres, he contrived to engage Sir John Ander-ton, Squire Rutherford, and M. Duval in an animated political discussion, and at the same time Mistress Rutherford was obliging enough to invite Madame Duval and Marguerite—who was an authority upon such matters—to go with her to another part of the house in order to inspect some home-spun cloth just finished, and which was the joint work of herself and her daughters. Kate and Etienne meanwhile having retired within the seclusion of a window-recess, and Auguste and Agnes growing absorbed in a brisk war of words over the merits of two favourite spaniels, William seized the opportunity, and walking to the door, cast a beseeching look upon Helen, which caused her very shortly to follow him from the room.

On the *tête-à-tête* which ensued, and which was held in a retired little room at some distance from the one they had quitted, we shall have the good manners not to intrude further than will enable us to gather the gist of the conversation which then took place. For William, the marrow and sweetness of those delicious mutual communications, occupying a full hour in the making, was this: that Helen really *did* love him, and with a love that was all the more deep and strong because it had been very slow in growth and development. With an amazement which almost took away his breath, the young captain

now learned that it was almost six years since that love had been born ; taking at first the form of an ardent admiration of his consistent unselfishness and filial devotion, but gradually widening and deepening—like a river upon its way to the sea—until at last its force and power had become such that, as a swollen torrent at flood-time, filled to the brink and ready to break down its embankments, so poor Helen's affection had been often upon the point of overleaping the restraints she had felt obliged to put upon it. For some time past, as she bashfully confessed, she had lived in continual dread of self-betrayal, only kept from sickness or despair by a firm reliance on God's goodness, and an unceasing struggle to submit herself to His will, and resign her beloved to His service.

For Helen the pith of that unlooked-for, but never-to-be-forgotten, interview consisted in the acknowledgment, upon William's part, that he had never, in spite of all his endeavours, been able to banish her from his heart, and in the asseveration that now he knew that she was willing to remain there, nothing but death could have power to dislodge her thence.

These mutual assurances of true and abiding attachment, repeated over and over again in divers forms—each newer and more delightful to the recipient thereof—together with the confession from William which had preceded them as to the real nature of his injury, and with numerous expressions of pity and distress from Helen, mingled with rejoicings over its result, and indignant rebutting of the insinuation that she might love him less on its account, filled up, as we have said, a full hour ; and indeed formed matter, in the opinion of those most concerned, for an entire month's conversation.

At the end of the hour, however, Helen insisted upon returning to the guest-chamber, where, she felt sure, their absence must long ago have called forth remark and sur-

prise. With unfeigned reluctance William obeyed, detaining her only a moment longer by the door of the little parlour to ask, in a somewhat nervous whisper, 'And what about Henry, my sweet? Dost recollect once saying i' my hearing that thy heart was buried in his grave?'

'Ah,' interrupted Helen, blushing deeply, but looking grave, 'that was a foolish speech, beloved; and there are no jealousies i' heaven, William. *He* said so himself, and he wished me to love thee. He said he would not have my life on earth empty.'

'Ah, my darling, neither of us can any more have our lives empty. We have God and each other to fill them. And, i' sooth, mine is overflowing with gratitude and love to Him who, when I so little thought ever to possess it, has given me the blessing of your love. O Helen, my treasure, let us make Him what return we can.'

CHAPTER XXXII.

A DOUBLE WEDDING.

IN the more natural and unsophisticated state of society which existed at the period of our story, marriage preparations, even among the higher classes, demanded much less time than at present, for then millinery and dress-making were not matters of such paramount importance; and exactly a fortnight from the day of William Anderton's return to Dieppe, a double marriage was celebrated in the ancient Church of St. Jacques.

Three houses having had the honour of supplying the brides and bridegrooms which made up this happy quartette, there had been some little discussion as to which of the three should have the privilege of providing the common marriage feast. This, however, had been speedily settled in favour of one which seemed equitably to claim the preference, by reason of the fact that from it was furnished a couple of these aspirants after the holy estate of matrimony, to wit, one bride and one bridegroom.

That bride and bridegroom were, as will readily be guessed, Kate and William Anderton; and it was accordingly in the large and well-furnished house William had built for his parents, and in which he had little thought ever to reside with a wife of his own, that the wedding festivities were held.

With the exception of Nicholas Weston and his good dame, there were no guests present but the members of the three families now so closely united, and the evening

was a very quiet and tranquil one, the joy of the wedded pairs being too deep, and the general thankfulness too heartfelt, to allow it to be otherwise. Supper ended, a huge wassail bowl was brought in, and a fragrant beverage concocted by Sir John Anderton with Squire Rutherford's active assistance, from which was to be drunk the health of the newly-married couples. That ceremony duly performed, other toasts, with appropriate speeches, followed; the first being proposed by Captain William Anderton in honour of M. Duval, of whom he spoke most gratefully as the author, under God, of all the prosperity which had attended his own and the other refugee families since, eight years ago, they had landed, homeless and penniless, upon those shores. Scarcely, however, would the good merchant suffer this toast to be responded to, and when the acclamation it called forth had ceased sufficiently to permit his voice to be heard, he earnestly disclaimed the merit imputed to him, affirming that the good fortune of his friends was due entirely to their own brave exertions and to the special favour of God, which, he believed, had been vouchsafed them as a reward for their sufferings in His cause and steadfastness in the faith. This laudation, in its turn, was objected to by Sir John Anderton, who, with no affected humility, asked what he or his companions had done to deserve their present happiness, or that almost miraculous escape they had had from the dreadful penalties to which they had rendered themselves liable, and which, for the very same causes, so many scores of others in their unhappy country had suffered. Then, with tears in his eyes, he went on to descant upon the horrors of the religious persecution which had, he said, turned England into one vast Ramoth Gilead, and of which the miseries they had witnessed in their own once sweet and peaceful valley were but a faint representation; and so carried away was he by this subject that at length, seeing

that his remarks were casting a gloom over the entire company, Squire Rutherford rather unceremoniously broke in, and bade the Baronet, for this one evening at least, forget all painful matters, and think himself, and let every one about him think, of their own blessings, and not of other people's misfortunes. Then, as though to redeem this somewhat selfish-seeming advice, the little man began to wonder what had become of Father Christopher (of whom our friends had last heard about a year before, at which time he had been living in concealment in a gentleman's house in the neighbourhood of Dublin), and expressed a hearty wish that the good priest were at that moment in their midst to bless with his presence their happy marriage feast.

This wish found a ready echo in every voice and heart; but on turning to his wife as he ceased speaking, the Squire noticed that she was furtively drying her eyes, and he knew well that she was thinking of one whom she, at any rate, would have preferred having of the party this evening even to Father Christopher; one who was still dear to her heart—for what true mother can ever forget the son of her womb?—but of whom, for eight long years, she had heard no tidings whatsoever.

Helen, too, who was seated next her, observed Mistress Rutherford's tears, and guessing truly at their cause, she stole her hand into her mother's; and comforted by the affectionate caress the poor lady murmured, in a low tone,

'Ah, Helen, an I could but see him once more, an I could but know he had repented him of his sin, I should be content. But without it I shall never, methinks, be able to die happy.'

Helen remained silent for a few moments; then pressing her hand, she whispered back,

'Well, dearest mother, trust in God. He holdeth all

hearts in His hand, and you know we be all used to pray daily for my poor brother's conversion. He will yet repent him, I trow, mother; and perchance God, who hath granted us so abundant favours, may crown them by suffering you again to behold your son.'

Mistress Rutherford smiled sadly, but shook her head as she rejoined,

'Ah, Helen, I see no likelihood on't. Bethink thee, child, 'tis eight years since we parted; and, as you be apprised, your father will not e'en let me write to him. An he wished to find us, therefore, Walter would know not where to seek. No, no; 'tis well nigh impossible we should ever meet again upon earth!'

It did, indeed, seem 'well nigh impossible,' and Helen did not venture to contradict her mother's assertion. Yet, strange to say, at the very moment of its utterance, Walter Willoughby was being borne past the house on his way to Le Bon Asile.

It was not long after nine when the little party broke up—for those were days of early rising and equally early going to bed. And, after an exchange of kindly adieus and last good wishes, the Rutherfords mounted their horses, whilst the Duvals set off to walk to their house, which was situated in another lane, but which could be reached, by crossing two or three fields, by a private path-way conducting to it from the residence they were quitting. According to a new arrangement, made in consequence of William's unexpected marriage, Kate and Etienne were, for the present, to take up their abode with the young man's parents, much to the delight of the latter, who had for some time past been mourning over the loneliness they would feel in their great house when both Marguerite and Etienne should have left it. Triumphantlly, therefore, they now carried off their new daughter; and instead of Kate, Helen remained behind with Sir John and William,

the former gentleman being quite willing to live with a son and daughter-in-law, instead of a daughter and son-in-law.

The day had been one of much excitement to Mistress Rutherford, and now that it was over, a reaction had set in, which disposed her to take a more gloomy view of things than was her wont. Riding a little in advance of Agnes and her father, for the lane was too narrow to admit three horses abreast, she had fallen into a melancholy reverie, in which the thought that henceforth Helen's home must be beneath another roof than her own, and that, though as regarded distance the separation was slight, her daughter could never again be just the same to her as formerly, mingled itself with reflections more disconsolate than usual about that more complete separation which was ever present as an undercurrent of sadness in her mind. From this reverie she was roughly awakened by the sudden shying of her horse, as, upon turning a corner of the lane, close by the house, a light was flashed in its face that startled the animal. A faint scream brought the Squire quickly to her side, but not before she had seen that there was no cause for alarm, the light being merely that of a lantern carried by a man whom she recognised as a respectable sailor and fisherman in M. Duval's employ.

As, however, the man held his light aloft, whilst apologising for the fright he had given her, both she and her husband noticed that he was accompanied by two other men, who, from their dress, as well as from their faces, they surmised, must be strangers to the town of Dieppe. And of this they were not long left in doubt; for, having finished his polite excuses, the Frenchman went on to inform them that his companions were Irish sailors, and that they had brought over from Dublin a gentleman who was, to all appearances, upon the very point of death, and whom they had just conveyed to the Squire's house,

whither he had insisted upon being taken immediately on landing. Thus introduced, the Irish tars proceeded to add further particulars upon their own account, stating that when this gentleman had first applied to their skipper for a passage across to this country, he had very emphatically refused it, feeling assured that the sick man could never survive the voyage, and had only been induced at length to comply with his request by the offer of three times the sum that could be legitimately demanded for the charter of the vessel.

At mention of the word 'Dublin,' a simultaneous ejaculation of 'Father Christopher! O, 'tis Father Christopher!' had broken from each of the Rutherfords; and now, waiting to hear nothing further, the Squire dropped a handful of coins into the sailors' ready palms, and putting spurs to their horses, the little party of equestrians soon reached their own door.

Learning upon inquiry into which room the visitor had been put, the Squire eagerly advanced towards it. But, upon opening the door, he fell back with an involuntary cry of disappointment, for, instead of the good Father whom he had so confidently expected to find there, a total stranger, as he thought, lay back upon a settle, his head supported by pillows, which a couple of the women-servants were just rearranging, and with the light from an oil-lamp falling upon his face, which was ghastly pale, and which, with its sunken cheeks and hollow eyes, looked like that of a reanimated corpse. For one instant Mistress Rutherford gazed at that face in doubt; then, thrusting aside her husband, who stood in the way, she bounded forward with a cry of mingled joy and agony, and falling upon her knees by the couch, rained passionate kisses upon the pallid brow, murmuring between them in tender accents, 'O, my son! my son! Is't verily thou, my son, my Walter?'

Roused by those endearing tones from the half-unconscious state into which he had fallen, the sick man opened his eyes and fixed them upon his mother. Then, raising himself by a great effort into a sitting position, he extended towards her both arms, and panted, in a scarcely audible voice, 'Mother, mother! forgive me; O, forgive me! I have come hither to crave your pardon, and his—my father's—before I die. O, dost think he will grant it? Dost think, mother, he will suffer me to die i' your arms?'

With outstretched hands and tear-blinded eyes, the Squire advanced to answer that question for himself. But ere he reached Walter's side the young man had fallen back in a heavy swoon; and as he lay in the loving arms which encircled him, it seemed as though he had, indeed, arrived but to die; that he was about to pass away then and there, leaving no clue as to how he had found out his parents, or what had been his life since their departure from Waradale.

Presently, however, he revived a little, without entirely recovering consciousness; and in that state was, at the Squire's suggestion, carried to another room in order to be put to bed. Whilst undressing him—as she insisted upon doing with her own hands—Mistress Rutherford all at once gave vent to a cry of horror and grief. Looking to see the cause, her husband, who was rendering her what assistance she would permit, perceived that immediately above the young man's left lung was a deep gash, about six inches wide, and made apparently by a sword-cut.

The wound was yet but very imperfectly healed, and, as the Squire was remarking that to it was probably owing Walter's present condition, his wife uttered a second cry, which was this time an agonised shriek, and pointed, with trembling finger, to another gash upon the back, corresponding in size and position to that upon the breast, and

which proved that the weapon, whatever it might be, had passed right through her son's body.

'O Thomas, he has been murdered! My child has been murdered!' exclaimed the poor mother; and overwhelmed by this discovery her own vitality gave way, and she sank fainting to the ground. Recovering after a time, however, by the aid of some simple remedies, she braced herself to bear the shock with more fortitude; and throughout that night the Squire, Agnes, and herself watched by Walter's bedside, expecting every moment to be his last.

But Walter Willoughby did not die that night, nor for several days after his arrival in Dieppe. He lived long enough to relate at intervals, and in broken sentences, the following facts—which we shall give, as he did, without details, but in our own language.

Almost immediately after his return, along with the rest of the pursuivants, from that unsuccessful hunt for Justice Windwood's escaped prisoners, Walter had been permitted to marry Caroline. Following out his previously-formed resolution, the amiable magistrate had then set about without delay to obtain for his son-in-law the mansion and estates of Hall-i'-th'-Wood.. By what means he succeeded in this endeavour Walter could not say, but that he did succeed was certain. In little over six weeks from the commencement of the negotiations into which he had entered for the purpose, Caroline and he were established in the home where he had passed his childhood and youth, and from which his cruel treachery had driven its rightful owner—his generous-hearted stepfather—and also his mother and sisters.

That he felt a great and almost unsurmountable repugnance to take up his abode in the Hall, Walter confessed, although, at the same time, he owned that there were reasons why he was heartily glad to get away from Ridgwood Manor.

The principal of these was that, ever since his return from Hull, Caroline had been living on very bad terms with her father. The cause for this Walter had been slow to learn; but the quarrels had at first grieved and alarmed him—for they had appeared to him to originate entirely with his wife, and to be the offspring of a contempt and dislike which she seemed suddenly, and without reason, to have conceived for her father. For that Justice Windwood still loved his daughter, and with the same passionate devotion as heretofore, was continually made manifest, even though, stung by her constant incivilities to him, he would sometimes make use of very strong and resentful language. These painful disagreements, however, did not reach their climax until after the death of Mistress Windwood, which event occurred about a month after the marriage; and it was only then that Caroline confided to her husband their true cause. This was that she more than suspected her father's violence to have been the occasion of her mother's illness and death,—and not an accidental fall, as was generally reported throughout the household.

That in this surmise the young lady was correct, the reader already knows. It was, however, from her own judgment of her father's character, and of his probable treatment of his wife on finding that she had released the captives, that she had guessed the truth, and not from Mistress Windwood's lips that she had learned it. For, even had she been disposed to give information against her husband—which is far from likely—the poor lady could not have done so, since, when first visited by her daughter, about an hour after the Justice's departure from the house, she had been found to be speechless from the effect of a paralytic stroke, which stroke was the result of a serious, and as it proved fatal, injury received by her spine in that heavy fall against the iron-spiked fire-guard. From the

time she had, after it, been laid upon her bed, until, with a countenance so peaceful and serene that none could look upon it without emotion, she had passed away from the troubles of earth, Mistress Windwood had neither moved nor spoken; and loving her mother, though with an affection by no means ardent, Caroline had been both shocked and distressed by the occurrence, and had been unable to conceal from her father the displeasure and disgust his cruelty had awakened in her bosom. The state of affairs, therefore, which had proved far from agreeable to Walter Willoughby before Mistress Windwood's death, became still more uncomfortable afterwards. And for other reasons besides Caroline's increased estrangement from her father, viz. that after his wife's demise the Justice took to drinking more and more heavily; that his temper, in consequence, grew daily more irascible; and that, as a convenient object, Walter was made to bear the brunt of his violent moods. It was, accordingly, with considerable satisfaction that the young man turned his back upon Ridgwood Manor when the arrangements for his doing so had been completed, though, as we have said, with much reluctance that he took possession of the old house, which must inevitably have contained for him so many painful associations and suggestions.

Not invariably—though, at the same time, not unfrequently—does retribution overtake the sinner in this world; but certain it is that in the cases both of Justice Windwood and Walter Willoughby just punishment did follow upon evil deeds. It followed in the instance of the elder man more speedily than in that of the younger; and never, from the day of his wife's death, did the unfortunate owner of Ridgwood Manor appear to enjoy a happy moment.

Forsaken by the only being whom he loved—for, after quitting his roof, Caroline could never be induced to call

upon her father, or take the slightest step towards a reconciliation—the wretched man gave himself up entirely to the vice of intemperance. His brain, heated and inflamed by his potations, presently became quite incapable of right reason; and ere long, frightened away by his furious and ungovernable rage, which now rose to the very verge of madness, all his servants left him. He then shut up every room in his house, with the exception of the kitchen, and there lived entirely, never going out of doors; save for the purpose of purchasing the ‘liquid damnation’ that was hurrying him to his doom. That doom he met on the first anniversary of his wife’s death; on the afternoon of which day he was found by a woman, who was in the habit of supplying him with what little solid food he ate, lying dead upon the ground, with wide-open terror-stricken eyes and distorted features—a victim to delirium tremens and all its horrors.

So perished Anthony Windwood, the priest-hunter, the robber, and the murderer.

Both naturally and legally her father’s inheritrix, Caroline succeeded without dispute to his immense possessions. But the increase of wealth was destined to bring no increase of happiness to its new owners. Fond of excitement and gaiety, Caroline had, after a few months of married life, begun to weary of the dulness of Erlestone Glen, and to pine for a change; and, now that it could be managed, she persuaded Walter to take her for a season to London, where her beauty soon gained her the admiration, and her riches the amusements, she coveted. But, though at first equally pleased with herself to escape from Hall-i’-th’-Wood, Walter shortly found his life in the metropolis unbearable on account of the jealousy he suffered through his wife’s flirtations; and he insisted, therefore, upon carrying her back to Waradale. Year after year, however, she managed, by dint of coaxing and pout-

ing, to get him to return with her there, and always with the same result of annoyance and agony to himself, and the same sudden home-coming at the end of a few months. But at length there arrived a time when London had lost all its attraction for Caroline Willoughby, and when she had found in quiet Waradale an excitement more powerful, and infinitely more dangerous, than any that city had furnished.

After standing empty for nearly seven years, Erlestone Grange had been purchased by a wealthy gentleman from Manchester. Some time after his settlement there with his family, a brother of his wife's, who was an officer in the army, had come over from Ireland to spend with his relations a short leave of absence from his regiment, stationed somewhere upon the borders of the English Pale. The gentleman was young, eminently handsome, fascinating in his manners, and dissolute and unprincipled in his heart. The sequel may soon be told. After two months of sinful love-making, Caroline eloped with him one night, when, under pretence of indisposition, she had contrived to occupy a separate chamber from her husband. Maddened with rage and grief, Walter started the following morning in pursuit, and coming upon the pair in Dublin, challenged the lover of his faithless wife to mortal combat.

The challenge was accepted, and the duel fought at an early hour of the morning, in a secluded spot some miles from the city.

The issue of it has already been described. Walter's antagonist ran his sword through his body, and left him, as he supposed, for dead. But aid was near; and the wound, though mortal, was not doomed to be instantaneously so. Recovering, after how long a space he knew not, from a syncope into which pain and loss of blood had thrown him, Walter found his head supported upon the

arm of a man who was endeavouring to stanch his wounds with bandages of cloth torn from his own raiment.

From his dress this man appeared to be a plain country gentleman; but, upon looking into his face, Walter recognised the features as those of Father Christopher. Fancying, however, upon the next moment that this must be an optical delusion sent by the father of lies to torment him in his last hour, the young man uttered a shriek of consternation and struggled to his feet. The effort brought on a renewal of the bleeding and also of the swoon; and when again Walter became conscious, he was lying upon a comfortable bed, and in a well-furnished room. On that bed he lay for many weeks, nursed during the hours of the day by a gentle old lady and two kindly-natured damsels, her maids, and visited each night by Father Christopher; for the good priest it had indeed been, who, during an early morning ramble, had found the wounded young man, and carried him to the house where he was at the time making his secret home.

Those visits, and the tender kindness shown in them by the holy man whom he had sought to betray to death, but who seemed to bear him nothing but good-will in return, melted the young man's heart, and, combined with his salutary sufferings of mind and body, led him to repentance.

Never having in reality lost his faith, though dead in trespasses and sins, he now made a true and contrite confession, and received the last sacraments in preparation for the end which, though his wounds were outwardly healing, he felt to be approaching through the injury to his lung. It was after this that Father Christopher, to his great joy, told him about the escape to France of his family and friends, and gave him their address, in order that he might write to his parents and beg their forgiveness. Instead of writing, however, Walter resolved, upon

reflection, to go to them, and die, as he yearned to do, in his mother's arms; and, as soon as he could walk, he hastened to put this design into execution before it should be too late. Delayed for several days, on account of the skipper's unwillingness to sail in the employment of a man in whose face death was so unmistakably written, Walter had been able to bring his friends some further news, which otherwise neither he nor they would ever have learned.

That news, the interest of which to its recipients may well be conceived, was this: that in the interval between quitting the house where he had been so kindly nursed, and sailing for France, Fr. Christopher and the gentleman who had harboured him for the last two years (Walter's late host) had been arrested, tried, and executed for the crime of Papistry, whilst the gentle old lady, mother of the lay culprit, had been thrown into prison.

A few words will now complete our story. Walter Willoughby died happily, repentant for his crimes, forgiven by those against whom he had sinned, and fortified by all the rites of that Holy Church from which he had apostatised. Mistress Rutherford did not long survive him, but Sir John Anderton and the Squire lived to a good old age. Agnes, in her seventeenth year, married Auguste Duval, and both Kate and she had several children.

William and Helen lived together as patterns of conjugal felicity, Helen frequently accompanying her husband upon his voyages, and coöperating by self-denial upon her own part in the carrying out of his purpose of devoting his labours and the proceeds of them to the cause of God, in the keeping alive and propagation of the Faith in his native country. They had no family; and with the death of the personages concerned in our history, the names of Anderton and Rutherford died out in Normandy.

THE END.



BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

WHICH IS RIGHT ?

Crown 8vo, cloth, 5s.

NORTON BROADLAND ; OR RECOLLECTIONS OF
MY YOUTH.

Edited by FABIAN.

6s.

NORA.

Taken from the German by PRINCESS MARIE LIECHTENSTEIN,
author of 'Holland House.'

Cloth gilt, 10s. 6d.

THE WYNDHAM FAMILY :

A STORY OF MODERN LIFE.

By the Author of 'Mount St. Lawrence.'

In 2 vols. 10s. 6d.

GERTRUDE MANNERING :

A TALE OF SACRIFICE.

By FRANCES NOBLE.

Second and cheaper Edition, 4s.

GERVASE SACHEVERILL :

AN EPISODE OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

By THEODORE HOWARD GALTON.

5s.

THE LADY OF NEVILLE COURT.

By the Authoress of 'Maggie's Rosary,' 'Marion Howard,'
'Peter's Journey,' &c.

4s. 6d.

DAME DOLORES, OR THE WISE NUN OF
EASTONMERE ;

AND OTHER STORIES.

By the Author of 'Tyborne,' &c.

4s.

ALICE LEIGHTON :

A TALE OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

6s.

IZA : A STORY OF LIFE IN RUSSIAN POLAND.

By KATHLEEN O'MEARA (Grace Ramsay),
Author of 'A Woman's Trials,' 'Frederic Ozanam,'
'Bells of the Sanctuary,' &c.

Second Edition, 7s. 6d.

CONTENTS.—1. Iza. 2. The Reign of Babas. 3. The Brothers. 4. The 'Better Brother.' 5. Ab Ovo. 6. Mariette's Wedding. 7. In the Forest. 8. By the River. 9. Shadows in the Sunlight. 10. Paul Kiploff. 11. The Ball at Lesno. 12. Watching for the First Star. 13. Other Watchers. 14. 'They also serve who only stand and wait.' 15. The Ride Home. 16. Paul Kiploff's Prophecy. 17. Choosing Recruits. 18. 'All went merry as a Marriage Bell.' 19. 'Hark ! Did ye not hear it ?' 20. Taken away. 21. A Brutal Soldiery. 22. Temptation. 23. A Midnight Revel. 24. The Examination. 25. Watching. 26. A Great Event for Matko Zarbak. 27. At Rest. 28. A Common Brotherhood. 29. A Disappointment. 30. The Petition to the Czar. 31. Paul Kiploff throws up the Game. 32. Parting. 33. The Invitation to the Ball. 34. The Governor's Ball. 35. Lady Mackintosh's Story. 36. Voices in the Wilderness. 37. Lady Mackintosh has an Interview with General Borynowaki. 38. Borynowski and Iza. 39. Preparing for the Journey. 40. The Departure. 41. Lady Mackintosh discourses with the Tartar. 42. The Journey's End. 43. Joy. 44. Flowers in the Desert. 45. A Fruitless Search. 46. Au Revolt.

TALES FROM THE DIARY OF A SISTER OF MERCY.

By C. M. BRAME.

New Edition, cloth gilt, 4s.

CONTENTS.—1. The Double Marriage. 2. The Cross and the Crown. 3. The Novice. 4. The Fatal Accident. 5. The Priest's Death. 6. The Gambler's Wife. 7. The Apostate. 8. The Besetting Sin.

4s. each:

FABIOLA, *gilt*.

THE THREE CHANCELLORS.

MARCO VISCONTI.

BRIDGE'S MODERN HISTORY.

LIFE OF M. OLIER.

PATRIOTS OF THE TYROL.

ALICE SHERWIN, OR THE DAYS OF HENRY VIII.

LIFE OF THE CURE D'ARS.

LIFE OF BLESSED HENRY SUSO.

LONDON: BURNS AND OATES.

Popular Books
OF
NARRATIVE, FICTION, &c.
FOR GENERAL READING,

Neatly bound in Cloth and Illustrated, post-free for the price named.

Tales from the Diary of a Sister of Mercy.

By C. M. BRAME. New Edition. Cloth, 4s.

Nellie Netterville: a Tale of Ireland in the Time of Cromwell. By CECILIA CADDELL, author of "Wild Times." 3s. 6d.; cloth elegant, 5s.

Angels' Visits: a Series of Tales. By C. M. BRAME, author of "Diary of a Sister of Mercy." 3s. 6d.

Grantley Manor. By Lady GEORGINA FULLERTON. Boards, 2s. 6d.; cloth, 3s.

"The skill with which the plot of 'Grantley Manor' is constructed, the exquisite truth of delineation which the characters exhibit, and the intensity of passion which warms and dignifies the subject, are alike admirable. . . . The depth of passion which surrounds the story of Geneva is the result of unquestionable genius. No heroine that we can remember excels this lovely creation in purity, deep affection, a solemn sense of the sanctity of duty, and a profound feeling of the beauty and holiness of religion."—*Times*.

Sea Stories: Tales of Discovery, Adventure, and Escape. A new and choice Collection, containing several striking Narratives, mostly unknown to English readers. Cloth, 3s.

"The best volume of the kind we have ever met with."—*Churchman's Companion*.

The Vessels of the Sanctuary, and the Manor of Mount Cruel : Tales of French Life, by ELIE BERTHET. Cloth, 2s. 6d.

Two of the best Tales of this fertile and popular Author.

The History of Jean Paul Choppart ; or the Surprising Adventures of a Runaway. Illustrated with 22 Engravings ; foolscap 8vo, cloth, 2s. 6d.

" 'Jean Paul Choppart' is a translation of a work which has become very popular on the Continent, and is destined to receive a large share of favour in this country, should parents and instructors of children become aware of the excellent moral which its pages convey through the medium of a story which is most piquant and catching for the youthful mind."—*Court Journal*.

Father Connell. By BANIM. A New Edition. Cloth, 2s. 6d.

" 'Father Connell,' the Irish 'Vicar of Wakefield.' "—*Literary Gazette*.

Ierne of Armorica : a Tale of the Time of Chlovis. By J. C. BATEMAN. 6s. 6d.

" We know of few tales that can be ranked higher than the beautiful story before us. The descriptions are masterly, the characters distinct, the interest unflagging."—*Month*.

" The book is excellent. If we are to have a literature of fiction at all, we hope it may include many like volumes."—*Dublin Review*.

" In reading this charming tale, we seem to be taken by the hand and made to assist at the scenes which the writer describes."—*Tablet*.

True to Trust ; or the Story of a Portrait. A Tale of the Times of Queen Elizabeth. 4s.

" A valuable addition to the narratives of the sufferings of our forefathers during that period."—*Tablet*.

" A powerful and well-written story. Several of the characters are admirably drawn."—*Weekly Register*.

" A welcome addition to the Catholic stories of days long gone by. We are sure that amongst the young it will be a favourite."—*Catholic Times*.

Wild Times ; a Tale of the Days of Queen Elizabeth. By CECILIA MARY CADDELL. New Edition. 5s.

" We are glad to indorse the favourable opinion we expressed of it at the time of its first appearance."—*Tablet*.

" Miss Caddell writes forcibly and well, and has given us in this story many vividly coloured pictures."—*Weekly Register*.

" An ably written narrative."—*Catholic Times*.

Peter's Journey, and other Tales. Cloth, 3s.

Passion-Flower : a Catholic Story. 5s.

"We should have to look back a long way before we could point to another novel so charming and attractive."—*Weekly Register*.

"Here is a book we can recommend. The story runs very smoothly, and is full of pleasant and natural gossip."—*Catholic Times*.

"Pleasing in its telling, and well written. The author may well feel sure of success."—*Catholic Opinion*.

"A pleasant and clever novel."—*Court Circular*.

Seven Stories. By Lady GEORGIANA FULLERTON.

Contents—1. Rosemary : a Tale of the Fire of London. 2. RepARATION : a Story of the Reign of Louis XIV. 3. The Blacksmith of Antwerp. 4. The Beggar of the Steps of St. Roch : a True Story. 5. Trouvaille ; or the Soldier's Adopted Child : a True Story. 6. Earth without Heaven : a Reminiscence. 7. Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam. 3s. 6d.

"Will be sure to repay perusal. The authoress has at once such a grasp of her subject, there is such a force and finish in her touch, that the productions of her pen will stand the test of the most rigid criticism."—*Weekly Register*.

"Sound in doctrine and intensely interesting as any which have come from the same pen."—*Catholic Opinion*.

"As admirable for their art as they are estimable for their sound teaching."—*Cork Examiner*.

Maggie's Rosary, and other Tales. By the Author of "Marion Howard." 3s. 6d.; cloth extra, 3s.; cheap edition, 2s.

"We have seldom seen tales which are better adapted for children's reading."—*Catholic Times*.

"We strongly recommend these stories. They are especially suited to little girls."—*Tablet*.

"The very thing for a gift-book for a child."—*Weekly Register*.

"A charming little book, which we can heartily recommend."—*Rosarian*.

French Eggs in an English Basket. From the French of SOUVESTRE. By Miss EMILY BOWLES. Cloth extra, 3s. 6d.

"A charming collection of stories, each with an excellent moral. Although foreign in construction and matter, they are thoroughly English in tone."—*Tablet*.

"We commend it to parents, and to the managers of schools and convents wanting prizes."—*Westminster Gazette*.

"Eminently suited for children. Adopting the title of the translator, we can well call them really wholesome French eggs in a very elegant English basket."—*Catholic Opinion*.

Marie and Paul: a Fragment. By "Our Little Woman." 3s. 6d.; gilt edges, 4s.

"A story told effectively and touchingly, and with all that tenderness and pathos in which gifted women so much excel."—*Weekly Register*.

"We heartily recommend this little book, feeling sure that none can rise from its perusal without being touched both at the beauty of the tale itself, and by the tone of earnest piety which runs through the whole, leaving none but holy thoughts and pleasant impressions."—*Tablet*.

"Well adapted to the innocent minds it is intended for."—*Catholic Opinion*.

"A charming tale for young and old."—*Cork Examiner*.

"To all who read it the book will suggest thoughts for which they will be the better, while its graceful and affecting, because simple, pictures of home and family life will excite emotions of which none need be ashamed. We trust that we may meet our author on a future occasion."—*Month*.

"A very charming story, and may be read by both young and old."—*Brownson's Review*.

A Packet of Sixpenny Books. No. 3. 3s.; cloth, 3s. 6d. Contents—Little Page; Valentine Duval; Pietro and his Pupil; Little Slater; Young Gassendi; Artist and his Dog; Little Vagrant.

Twelve New Stories. By Mrs. PARSONS. 1. Bertha's Three Fingers. 2. Take Care of Yourself. 3. Don't go in. 4. The Story of an Arm-chair. 5. Yes and No. 6. The Red Apples under the Tree. 7. Constance and the Water Lilies. 8. The Pair of Gold Spectacles. 9. Clara's New Shawl. 10. The Little Lodgers. 11. The Pride and the Fall. 12. This Once. 3d. each; in a packet complete, 3s.; or in cloth neat, 3s. 6d.

Also, by the same,

Dyrbington. 3s.; cheap edition, 1s. 8d.

Tales for Young Men and Women. 2s. 6d.

Twelve Tales for the Young. 3s.

Twelve Tales for Children. 2s.

Heath-House Stories. Cloth, 1s. 6d.

Afternoons with Mrs. Maitland. Cloth gilt, 2s.; cheap edition, 1s. 6d.

Anecdotes and Incidents, Ecclesiastical and Religious. Containing 119 distinct Sketches. Cloth gilt, 2s. 6d.

Dame Dolores, or the Wise Nun of Eastonmere; and other Stories. By the Author of "Tyborne," &c.
Contents—1. The Wise Nun of Eastonmere. 2. Known too Late. 3. True to the End. 4. Olive's Rescue. 4s.

Also, by the same,

Tyborne; and Who went thither in the Days of Queen Elizabeth: a Sketch. New Edition. Cloth, 3s. 6d.

"A thrilling tale, written in a style most attractive to young people."
—*Tablet*.

"This is not a work of fiction. The author has taken historical facts, and judiciously woven them into a tale full of interest for us in England."
—*Catholic Opinion*.

"A good book for school-prizes; and if we had our will we should have it read in all the schools and convents of the land."—*Westminster Gazette*.

Florine, Princess of Burgundy: a Tale of the First Crusade. By WILLIAM BERNARD MACCABE. Third Edition. With Preface and Notes. Now first published. Cloth, 5s.

"This thrilling tale is a model of the kind of books most required, combining as it does amusement and instruction with all the requisites of a sound Catholic work."—*Weekly Register*.

"The marvellous plot and description of scenery and character are such as would have done no discredit to the great 'Wizard of the North,' Sir Walter Scott himself."—*Catholic Times*.

"Full both of interest and instruction, and may fairly be reckoned among the ornaments of our lighter literature."—*Dublin Review*.

Fabiola: a Tale of the Catacombs. By CARDINAL WISEMAN. New Edition. Cloth, 3s. 6d.; gilt, 4s.; morocco, 9s.

The same dramatised—*The Youthful Martyrs of Rome.*
By the Very Rev. Canon OAKELEY. Cloth, 1s. 4d.

Callista: a Historical Tale. By Dr. NEWMAN. New Edition, 5s. 6d.; Popular Library Edition, cloth gilt, 4s.; cloth, 3s. 6d.

The same as a drama. By HUSENBETH. 2s.

Little Flower-Garden; or Tales for the Young.
First Series. In a packet, 1s. 6d.; cloth, 2s. *Ellen's Dream, &c. Lucy's Pilgrimage. The Shepherd Boy. Requiescat in Pace. Little Adam. The Cherries, &c. The Rosary. No Virtue without Struggle. Little Martin. Tale of the Ardennes. The Two Mothers. The Two Italians.*

Little Flower-Garden ; or Tales for the Young.

Second Series. By CECILIA CADDELL. In a packet, 1s. 6d.; or bound in cloth, 2s. Month of Mary. Feast of Corpus Christi. Sacred Heart of Jesus. The Assumption. The Nativity. The Purification. Ash-Wednesday. The Annunciation. Holy Week. Easter. Rogation-Day. Pentecost.

Scenes and Incidents at Sea. A New Selection.

1s. 4d. Contents—1. Adventure on a Rock. 2. A Heroic Act of Rescue. 3. Inaccessible Islands. 4. The Shipwreck of the Czar Alexander. 5. Captain James' Adventures in the North Seas. 6. Destruction of Admiral Graves' Fleet. 7. The Wreck of the Forfarshire, and Grace Darling. 8. The Loss of the Royal George. 9. The Irish Sailor Boy. 10. Gallant Conduct of a French Privateer. 11. The Harpooner. 12. The Cruise of the Agamemnon. 13. A Nova Scotia Fog. 14. The Mate's Story. 15. The Shipwreck of the Æneas Transport. 16. A Scene in the Shrouds. 17. A Skirmish off Bermuda. 18. Charles Wager. 19. A Man Overboard. 20. A Loss and a Rescue. 21. A Melancholy Adventure on the American Seas. 22. Dolphins and Flying Fish.

Never Forgotten ; or the Home of the Lost Child.

By CECILIA CADDELL. Second Edition. Cloth, 3s. 6d.

"A well-drawn and pleasing picture of convent life."—*Tablet*.

"A beautiful story of the perfect Catholic character."—*Universe*.

"The accomplished authoress has conferred a great boon on Catholics by publishing this story."—*Weekly Register*.

Laurentia : a Tale of Japan. By Lady GEORGIANA

FULLETON. Second Edition. 3s. 6d.

"Looking at its literary merits alone, it must be pronounced a really beautiful story ; but it will be read with still deeper interest from the fact of its being full of romantic records of the heroism of the early Christians of Japan in the sixteenth century."—*Catholic Times*.

"This gracefully written work has very considerable literary merit, and possesses an interest entirely its own."—*Weekly Register*.

By the same Author,

Rose Leblanc : a Tale. 3s.

The Gold-Digger, and other Verses. 5s.

"The spirit that breathes throughout is one of true Catholic devotion."—*Weekly Register*.

"We do not know which most to admire, the genuine modesty of the preface to this volume of poems or the Catholic tone and sweet tenderness of the verses themselves."—*Westminster Gazette*.

"Alike creditable to the heart and intellect of the authoress."—*Catholic Times*.

8 *Popular Books of Narrative, Fiction, &c.*

	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
The Keeper of the Lazaretto ; or the Isle of the Dead.		
By SOUVESTRE	1	0
The Book of 300 Anecdotes	1	0
Columbus and La Pérouse	1	4
Preciosa. By CERVANTES	1	0
Tales of Kings and Queens	1	0
Tales of Joy and Sorrow	1	0
Tales of France	1	0
Book of Poetry, for the Young	1	0
Book of Ballads, for the Young	1	0
The Two last in One Volume	2	0
Popular Poetry	2	0
Selections from the Poets. By DE VERE	3	6
Pictures, Tales, and Parables	3	0
Tales of the Crusades	2	6
Breton Legends	3	0
Tales of Wonder. By HAUFF	2	6
Andersen's Select Tales	2	0
Robinson Crusoe. Pocket Edition	2	6
Arctic Voyages	2	0
Du Guesolin ; or the Hero of Chivalry	2	0
Tales of Celebrated Women	2	0
Tales of Celebrated Men. Illustrated	3	6
Tales of Enterprise, Peril, and Escape	3	0
The War in La Vendée	4	6
The Patriot War in the Tyrol	4	0
Tales of Land and Sea. Gilt	3	0
Tales of Humour. Gilt	3	6
Countess of Glosswood	3	6
Kate Kavanagh	2	0
Pictures of Christian Heroism. Cloth	3	0
Pictures, Tales, and Parables. Many cuts	3	0
Pictures of Missionary Life. Cloth	3	0

LONDON: BURNS & OATES,
17 & 18 PORTMAN STREET AND 63 PATERNOSTER ROW.

1



